Fritz

JUDE THE OBSCURE

&

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

HARDY

Kitab Mahal Series on English Literature

MASTER GUIDE
To
Thomas Hardy's
Jude the Obscure
and
The Return of the Native

By

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KITAB MAHAL

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CONTENTS

"THOMAS HARDY"

A Short Biographical Sketch

His Birth and Ancestry : "My dear fellow" Arnold Bannett is said to have once remarked to **Hugh Walpole**, "When you are born, you are done for." This universal truth, spoken in jest, is well illustrated in the life of Thomas Hardy. Born with a frail body, a strong mind and a compassionate soul, Hardy was from the very first 'condemned' to a literary career. As a child, he loved to watch the maggots in a mud-puddle near his father's house in Dorsetshire. "These helpless little creatures were passing their time in mad carousal ....pool." Often he asked himself what was meaning of all this. As he grew older, he turned his attention to the larger but equally helpless human maggots who wallowed and multiplied and died in the mud puddle of the earth. And he decided to sit by the road side and spend his life in an effort to unravel the meaning of it all.

At his birth, June 2, 1840, he was so puny that the doctor pronounced him dead. Thanks to a vigorous slapping from the family nurse, however, he was 'called back' to a life that was to last almost ninety years. His family was one of the branches of Dorest Hardys, formerly of influence in and near the valley of the Frome, claiming descent from John Le Hardy of Jersey (son of Clement Le-Hardy, lieutenant Governor of that Island in 1488), who settled in the west of England.

His Education and other Accomplishments : His father, a building contractor, allowed his son 'little fellow with the face of an old man', to roam over the heath instead of going to school. "Let him drink in plenty of sunthought.

He can absorb his education later on." The child's earliest schooling, therefore, was in the outdoors. His books were running brooks. He became familiar with living things through all the five senses. And through a sixth sense——an all-embracing sympathy——he was thrilled by the faces and the voices of the animals, the birds, and the trees. "As a child," he wrote in later years, "I learned that every species of tree has its voice as well as its feature. At the passing of the breeze the fir trees sob and moan no less distinctly than the rock; the holly whistles as it battles with itself; the ash hisses amid its quiverings; the beech rustles while its flat boughs rise and fall."

He felt at one with all nature——a 'blood relationship' with the winds and the clouds, the butterflies and the bees, the sparrows and the squirrels and the lambs. In his vivid imagination he frequently tried to identify himself with these external objects and creatures. Once as a child, he 'became' a sheep. He got down on all fours in a field and began to 'eat grass.' When he looked up, he was 'quite puzzled——as he expressed it latter——to see the 'astonishment' in the eyes of the other sheep at the spectacle of this new addition to their fold. When he reached his ninth year, his heart had become thoroughly attuned to the heart of nature. And now began his formal education. His father sent him to 'Mr. Lasts Academy for young gentleman', ——a private school three miles away from the Hardy Cottage. Every day as he walked to and from school, he stopped for a 'friendly chat' with his playmates——the wild creatures of Egdon Heath. But he loved especially to watch human faces. As he approached Dorchester, the town in which his school was situated, he had to cross a stone bridge. He would always stop on the middle of the bridge and study the people who passed by. "There are so many interesting stories in human faces."

At school he was the littlest fellow with the biggest head in his class. His teachers were amazed at the rapidity with which he absorbed knowledge. When he graduated

at the sixteen, he was thoroughly familiar with Latin, French and English literature, especially with the plays of Shakespeare. He knew them almost by heart. He was very anxious to go to college———this quiet, studious and sensitive Jude the Obscure———but his father could not afford the luxury. It was high time for the youngester to begin to make his own living. He must be taught a profession or a trade———something easy, so it would not tax his frail and puny body. Music? Tommy was a pretty good fiddler. His father had taught him to play on the instrument. But there was no money in that. To be sure father and son often played at country wedding. But what self-respecting fiddler of Dorestshire would ever think of charging a fee for that friendly service? What else———then, could he try? To ministry? To this, however, there were two objections: the slenderness of his purse and the unimpressiveness of his stature. There was only one thing left, therefore———architecture. The father was a master builder, let the son become a master planner. So Hardy was apprenticed to John Hicks, an ecclesiastical architect, who had his office in the neighbouring town of Dorchester.

But Hardy had no great love for drawing blue-prints. The work was too mechanical. He was by nature an artist, not a scientist. Though faithful in his work, he spent all his leisure time in studying and dreaming. He got up at five in the morning, sometimes even at four, and spent a couple of hours teaching himself to read Greek. Within three years he could converse fluently with Aeschylus and with Homer, as well as with the writers of the New Testament. His familiarity with his favourite language———the universal grammar of Nature, was constant. And he translated this grammar into English muse. He had discovered that he was a poet. "I began to write poetry because I had to, because of orders from within."

His life in London: In 1861, he was compelled to apply himself more strictly to architecture, sketching and measuring many old Dorest churches with a view to their

restoration. In 1862, he went to London (which he had first visited at the age of nine) and became assistant to the late Sir Arthur Blomfield R A. Here he worked for five years ———a bearded, pale and quiet little fellow, saying little and absorbing much ——— "a not unworthy chap ———a son of very humble parentage yet a thorough artist." In 1863, he won the medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, for an essay on Coloured Brick and Terra-cotta Architecture, and in the same year won the prize of the Architectural Association for design.

His First Marriage : This young draftsman met and wooed and married a girl of a social status superior to his own. He was engaged in trestoring the St. Juliot Church at Cornwall———a job for which he had been recommended by his employer, Mr. Bromfield. In the course of his work he had made the acquaintance of Miss Emma Gifford, the sister-in-law of the rector of St. Juliot. Miss Gifford was an expert horsewoman, a competent singer, a fairly good painter, and allround snob. "What she has found in me, the son of a poor mason, I can't tell." But somehow or other he managed to blurt out his proposal ; and she, forgetting his shabby overcoat and his unkempt beard 'condescended' to say yes. And thus, "I came back from Cornwall with magic in my eyes."

A brief delirious honeymoon, and a long life of marital incompatibility. For they never understood each other. Socially and Physically they lived at a different place. She loved to gallop in the saddle, and he preferred to walk—— he never learned to ride horse back. Throughout their days they were unable to keep in step. But Hardy never complained. He tried to make a comfortable home for his wife, and to provide for her at least a minimum of the 'necessaries' demanded by a woman of her station. While depending upon his architecture for a living, he resorted more and more to writing as his life's work. At the instigation of Emma, his wife, he turned from poetry to prose. "I never wanted to write prose novels at all. I was forced to manufacture them." Thus some of the gratest love stories

in English literature grew out of the nagging woman who did not love her husband.

In 1867, Hardy left London for Weymouth and finally settled at Max Gate Dorchester where he built for himself a house in 1885 and began the career of a full-fledged writer of verse and prose alike. After the publication of 'Jude the Obscure' he gave up fiction and was poet once more like Milton who gave up poetry and zealously brought out works of prose which are in no way inferior to his mighty poetic production ——— and returned to poetry in 1658 and was poet once more and for ever. Hardy wrote and published eight volumes of lyric poetry and a dramatic poem ——— 'The Dynasts'. And gradually he regained his lost respectibility. Now every-body admired him. He drifted serenely into an old age marred only by the loss of his wife. It was a severe blow in spite of their marital differences. "Even a stormy life has its restful tang."

His second Marriage : And after the storm, the calm. He married again, and for once the autumn and the spring ——— he was 74 and she was 35 ——— combined into matrimony of a perfect union. Though a poet in her own right, the second Mrs. Hardy was, to use her own expression, 'content with his reflected glory.'

Hardy won reputation and public recognition. The Order of Merit was conferred upon him in July 1910.

His Exit from the World Stage : It was in a glorious and serene sunset that Hardy ended the long day of his life in 1928 at his own home Max Gate Dorchester, leaving behind him a sweet memory and a noble thought. His ashes were buried in Westminster Abbey. As St. John Ervine expressed in his tribute to Hardy, "We have learned from you that the proud heart can subdue the hardest fate. In all that you have written, you have shown the spirit of man persisting through defeat."

Character And Personality of Thomas Hardy

We have seen in the previous section that Hardy's was a life full of trials and tribulations. Unusually weak in health and enormously huge in brain, this promising child of parents who were themselves highly cultured——— the father noted for his aptitude and excellence in music; the mother known for her sense of self-respect and deep piety———was since his infancy given to dreaming and contemplation. He at once picked up an organic familiarity with the surrounding nature. His fondness for human faces wherein he read stories of unique import is proverbial. His love of animals and lower animals, his strange joy for the comic and the grotesque, his sweet and easily impressionable temperament and lovable manners are simply amusing.

Hardy's life was not primarily one of action. He was by nature a scholar and a writer. His mind was richly stored with impressions. There are reasons for it. First, he had a retentive memory. He himself said that he had the faculty of embalming an incident, or an emotion and of resurrecting it as many as forty or fifty years later with perfect fidelity. Above all, he was by nature sensitive and extremely intuitive.

Anybody who came in his contact never went unimpressed by him. Not that his reputation as an author of great work brought him this exuberance of love. Indeed the circles of his admirers was easily smaller than that of his condemners. It was from his boyhood days that he was a companion of both the sexes. Even to-day people travels thousands of miles or more, not only to see the places where he was born and his body was buried, but the woods, fields and houses inhabited by his characters, as if these were the background for real lives, a part of chronicled history.

According to all available accounts of Hardy's early life, he was given to melancholy. He was fond of solitude, though by no means inaccessible to good-fellowship, and enjoyed a good laugh as much as anyone, espeacially if the joke was of a profane or sardonic character. All his life he had a weakness for horrible incidents, grim legends, creepy stories, accounts of spells, omens, ghosts, murders, suicides, and the like. He would visit the scene to find out all he could about the sinister event and enjoy its full flavour. He never seems to have missed a funeral, at least of anyone distinguished or of his own kin. He is always full of reminiscenes of those melancholy festivals. He could never banish his deep-rooted sense of the supernatural or reduce himself to the calm indifference of a Huxley or a Leslie Stephen. Hardy was granted many honours, academic and civic, and he accepted them calmly. He basked with characteristic quietude in royal and international favour. No less than five Scottish and English universities conferred honorary degrees on him between 1905 and 1925. He received an LL.D. from Aberdeen in 1905 and from St. Andrew's in 1922, a D. Litt. from Cambridge in 1913, a Doctor of Letters from Oxford in 1920 and from Bristol in 1925. He was also made an Hon. Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge in 1913, and of Queen's College, Oxford in 1922. Thus this great genius who never saw the college for regular education, attained the heights seldom reached by many of his station. He accepted the Presidency of the Society of Authors in 1908. The Order of Merit was conferred on him by the King in 1910. He received the invitation to the coronation in 1911, which for personal reasons he refused, and in the same year the gold medal of the Royal Society of Literature was presented to him by Yeats and Sir Henry Newbolt. In 1908, he became a Representative Governor of the Grammar School, and later a full Governor.

It is very pleasing to know that Mr. A. Compton Rickett, who knew him for more than a quarter of century, has given quite a different impression of Hardy's character. He says in 'Portraits and Personalities,' "My ultimate

impression of his personality is diametrically opposed to the popular view. Spoken of so frequently as a melancholy man, who took a drab and pessimistic view of life, I have often thought how strongly different this is from the bright and jolly companion whom I knew............He was a quiet little man with sardonic eyebrows and twinkling eyes. Watch him tucked away in a corner of rural inn, laughing heartily over some rustic tradition and telling in his turn a story of tragic or comic import."

Hardy possessed an inborn love of buildings, abbeys and chapels. The Gateway Cerne Abbas was an especial favourite of Hardy. He often visited these scenes in the company of his wife whom he called 'flower.' He was interested in anything that was pulsating with life. Music was his constant pleasure, and on the night before his death, he asked to listen to his favourite piece. He was very found of watching the performances of plays by Ben Jonson and Shaw in London, where he talked with Gorky and Conrad, as well as numerous English writers, Bennett, Wells, Galsworthy, Kipling and others.

Many of the portraits and descriptions of Hardy's appearance date from his later years when painters, sculptors and writers competed with each other to interpret that grave and gloomy countenance with its saintlike eyes and expression. When Vere Collins met Hardy, he was old enough. "I hesitate the word 'old', so opposed is it in its ordinary associations to the vigour of intellect and the liveliness of sentiments that marked his conversation; the quickness of his thought, the versality of his interests; the alertness in his voice; his gestures; his keenness of sight; the clearness and steadiness of his handwriting." Many years later Collins added: "He was rather below medium height: slim, erect. His face was not strongly lined; his complexion was clear, without the dull sallowness or discolouration usually found in old, or even elderly people. He was dressed in a brown tweed suit...........was neat without being drapper. He spoke fluently and distinctly, with occasional emphasis to mark surprise, regret or

disapproval. His manner was quiet, though genial and unassuming. One can't say he had a noticeable or impressive appearance or manner. There was no expression of melancholy on his face."

Charles Morgan thought that Hardy was "bird like...... like a small bird with a great head. He was not simple; he had the formal subtlety peculiar to his own generation; there was something deliberately 'ordinary' in his demeanour which was a concealment of extraordinary fires. There was something timid as well as fierce, as if the world had hurt him and he expected it to hurt him again. But what fascinated me above all was the contrast between the plainness, the quiet rigidity of his behaviour and the passionate boldness of his mind." The same contrast is also found by John Cowper Powys: "There was much of the falcon about his aquiline (parrot-like) nose and his hovering and 'pouncing' eye-glances; an intensity of regard that was accentuated by the slightness of his figure, by the curiously elfin tilt of his eye-brow, and by his trick of holding his head to one side as though the fraility of his form were constantly deprecating the terrible and august passion of his thought." It is very tempting to add the description of Hardy by his 'flower', Mrs. Hardy (Florence). She describes him as follows: "..............a smile of exceptional sweetness, and his eyes were a clear blue grey. His whole aspect was almost child-like in his sincerity and simplicity, the features being strongly marked...........his nose more Roman than aquiline. The nobility of his brow was striking."

And surely she was faithful to him and was happy with his old age and departed glory. In 1927 Sir Edmund Gosse wrote: "He is a wonder if you like. At eighty-and-a-half without deficiency of sight, hearing, mind or conversation. Very tiny and fragile, but full of spirit and gaiety".

All through his life, Hardy was sublime. His courage was enormously integrated. With a brave breast he looked in the face of mighty troubles of body and mind. It was a great solace to him to have Florence as his wife at the time when the dark clouds of despair were sure to fall upon his health terribly. It was, on the contrary, a pity that he never was blessed with a child which he expected even in his eighty second year. In short, his life was a bold adventure of spirit which he undertook heroically and closed with a befitting grandeur, that was permeated with the milk of human kindness to the very core.

Hardy's Age and his Tragic Vision

George Eliot, a compound of rational thinking and religious instinct, seeks a substitute for Christian dogma in a religion of social service. Meredith, whose morality is broader and more imaginative in outlook, seeks not so much to rationalize religion as to spiritualize nature. Little of this spirit of assent is to be found in Hardy, who is more inclined to protest against the inadequacy of life than to extol its fullness. He finds in nature not a balanced economy but maladjustment, perversity, and frustration. In his novels and poems, the earth is not paradise, and life is not a theme for rapture. Instead of sharing in Meredith's faith in the power of intelligence and an untrammelled spirit, he accepts the mechanical interpretation of nature implicit in Darwinian theory. The universe he sees as a place of blind necessity and inexorable law, ruled by a power which takes no account of human aims, and in thus being indifferent to man is wantonly cruel. He is disturbed by the absence of sympathy for human aims. There is a gulf between organic and inorganic matter which leaves man an outcast in his own home. Nature is moved by forces foreign to man, although man himself is a product of nature. The absence of any bond of sympathy between parent and child, if we mean by parent the inanimate universe, has the effect of converting the inscrutable power behind the universe into what, as far as man is concerned, is virtually a demon.

We are not to understand from this assertion that Hardy believed in the existence of an actively malign power. There is no question here of evil spirits but rather of an unsentient creation giving birth to sentient creatures. In this circumstance is the source of man's tragic plight.

He has been lifted up only to be dashed down. The web of consciousness into which he has managed to weave so many brightly coloured threads of hopes and aspirations has served finally to entangle him in the recognition of this dilemma. In a universe which takes no heed of his projects, he sees himself doomed to be perpetually cheated of his aims and mocked by a superior power, which, though innocent of evil intent, seems to grin maliciously at his fruitless exertions.

The world, as pictured by Hardy, is a place of disaster where sinister powers are at work to thwart man. Evil turns up at every corner, but man is not primarily to blame. The evil outside, in Hardy's view, is greater than the evil in man. Conversely, the good which is within man is greater than the good outside him. The result of such a division is that a conflict arises between the good in man and evil in nature. Man is too good for the world, which is blind to his superior qualities and will have none of them. The characteristic situation of a Hardy novel readily takes the form of drama. It is a struggle between man and his environment.

Without entering into a controversy, it can be said that numerous factors were responsible for Hardy's melancholy view of life was conditioned by the circumstances of his early life. This is often so with a writer. The type of life and character to which people are brought up is the only type which they understand instinctively. Their subsequent and mature view of human nature in general is always founded on this, the first example with which they came into contact. Further, most people are intensely responsive to experience only when they are young. It is then that impressions pierce down to that deepest level of the mind where the seeds of creative life lie hid. First impressions are the most memorable and the most durable. Hardy is no exception to this rule. He was the son of humble parents, only just above the rank of labourer, and the first twenty years of his life were spent in a village near the town of Dorchester. The life which he saw

around him was an agricultural life, little touched by the changes of the modern age. Everyone, except the clergyman and the schoolmaster, lived by the land. And they lived hard. In poor clay-built cottages men struggled years after years against wind and weather to maintain the link between body and soul. Real life in Dorchester was a piece of tragic drama. Lovers were parted ; a young man, in need of a livelihood, would leave the place to seek his fortune, years later he would return, but only to find his sweet-heart married to another. It such a world, confined and elemental, passions grew to desperation. Men, brooding on their wrongs until they seem intolerable, found the expression of their emotions a crime. Then, by the stern laws of those days, the offenders would be hanged at Dorchester. Hardy saw two hangings before he was eighteen. He stood under the scaffold to see a woman die on one occasion. On another, from a neighbouring hill, he watched through a telescope the white figure of a man, outlined against the facade of the prison, drop from the gallows at the clock struck eight. Overcome with horror, he turned homeward.

Hardy was a very sensitive boy, responding precociously to experience ; and the life in which he grew up stamped itself so deeply on his imagination that when his faculties had reached the creative stage of development, he conceived his picture in its terms. There was plenty of tragedy in the life of Wessex labourers, with its poverty and its passion. Life to them was life in the raw. Dependent and ignorant, exposed alike to the oppressions of the social system and the caprice of the weather, the people among whom Hardy was brought up were made conscious of man's helplessness in the face of circumstances. Hardy, too, was the man to realize the tragedy implicit in such a life. He had a tender heart unusually responsive to the spectacle of suffering. As a little boy, he even hated seeing the branches lopped off the trees ; the first time he saw a dead bird he was struck by an awful, unforgettable chill of horror. Sometimes as a c ild he would sit bya

mud-puddle near his father's house and watch the growth and decay of the maggots——'these helpless little creatures were passing their time in mad carousal.' As he grew older, he turned his attention to the large but equally helpless human maggots who wallowed and multiplied and died in the mud-puddle of the earth. By the time he was fifteen a shadow had already fallen across his vision of life. He tells us he remembers lying back in the sun and wishing that he need not grow up. He wanted to stay just as he was, in the same place, with the same few friends. The infinite possibilities of failure and suffering that mature life seemed to hold terrified him, and made him shrink back. This shrinking back into some place of security and safety embodied itself in the form of psychological fear. He fancied, he says, "that a figure stood in his van, with arm uplifted, to knock him from any pleasant prospect he indulged in as probable." And not only him. It was the enemy of mankind in general. For Hardy's was a speculative mind, instinctively reasoning from particular observations to a general conclusion. Since the world he looked at seemed so full of pain and disappointment, then, he argued, pain and disappointment were outstanding characteristics of human existence.

This disposition to melancholy view was confirmed and accentuated by the age in which he lived. It was a disturbing age for a sensitive mind; it was an age of transition. The industrial revolution was in the process of destroying the old agricultural England; the population was shifting; the old ties which had united the small communities of the past were breaking bit by bit. Along with the disintegration of the old social and economic structure went a disintegration of ideas. Eighteenth century rationalism had united with the new romantic spirit of rebellion against convention, to shake the fundamental basis of belief——religious, social, political——which the people of old England had unquestionably accepted. Since the beginning of the century, leaders of thought were, for the most part unorthodox. The mental

atmosphere of reflective minds tended to be overcast by clouds of doubt. Towards the middle of the century, it was further disturbed by the higher criticism of the Bible and the Darwinian theory of evolution. People were feeling already uncertain about the philosophic basis of Christianity, which was hope and faith in the dignity of human nature and the mercy of an all-pervading God. And not only Christianity——the new ideas struck a blow at all religious and ideal interpretations of the universe. If the universe was only a mechanical process, evolving from no one knew what, in a direction no one knew where, what was the significance of those moral and spiritual ideals which man had learned to regard as the most precious things in life ? If Christianity was not true, what became of the consolation of Christianity, the conception of Divine justice, bringing all to good in the end ? New thinkers——some rationalist, some romantic——disputed bitterly with one another as to what creed should take place of the old religious certainty. The thoughtful person saw himself swept towards darkness, like a straw on a torrent, by a ruthless, mysterious and ignoble force. Artists were deeply affected by this atmosphere of doubt and disbelief. Some of these artists lingered in the old faith, others took refuge in the worlds of beauty conjured up by their imaginations. But some artists could find no consolation for themselves, and for the first time pessimism found expression in English literature, in the works of writers like Matthew Arnold, Fitzgerald and Thomas Hardy. Above all, Hardy was especially open to the melancholy implications of the new conditions of life. As a country-man, he belonged to the world that was passing away. That rural England, which was sanctified for him by every tie of childish sentiment, was beginning to crumble before his eyes. Every year he noticed that old habits were discontinued ; that stories and songs were being forgotten ; that families established for years in a place were leaving it. No doubt the standard of living was improving, but the mental peace and spiritual consolation had vanished away.

Hardy was still more affected by the disintegration of the old ideas. Brought up in a society in which the tradition of medieval days had lasted longest, he was naturally marked that transition. He had no patience with the new gaities and pleasures brought about by the development of modern science. Taken as a whole, he felt that the loss to human happiness involved by the new scientific interpretation of life far outweighed the gain. He felt a wistful yearning for the comfort and the beauty of the old belief. It is significant to note that tragedy in most of his novels turns upon the conflict between the old and the new, the medieval and the modern. In every novel he tries to point out what miseries and disasters will follow from the impact of modern compititive civilization on the primitive and simple life of the old world. As one of his critics has rightly observed. "The theme of all Hardy's great novels is in some degree the tragic result of the imoact of this 'new and strang spirit' on the lives of the Wessex men and women.............Again and again he shows us the tragic consequences that ensue from the a Sergeant Troy, a Dr. Fitzpiers or a Lucetta Templeman with the unsophisticated straight-forward country folk like Gabriel Oak, Giles Winterborne and Michael Henchard. Such relationships reveal a kind of tragic conflict between the spirit of two ages, and it is all more tragic because the chief actors are often unconscious of it."

Briefly speaking, the rapid growth of scientific knowledge in the latter half of the 19th century contributed to a sense of disillusionment, which we find in much of the literature of the period. The study of biology, in particular, brought profound changes in man's estimate of himself and his place in the universe. The scientist explains the world without regard to, or flattery of, human pretentions. Such an attitude was disturbing to many people, who felt that the most sacred aspects of life were being profaned. The pessimistic vision of Hardy was profoundly coloured by the age he lived in.

Works of Thomas Hardy

(*i*) Novels and stories.

1. Desperate Remedies. (1871)
2· Under the Greenwood Tree. (1872)
3. A Pair of Blue Eyes. (1873)
4. Far from the Madding Crowd. (1874)
5. The Hand of Ethelberta——— a comedy in chapters. (1876)
6. The Return of the Native. (1878)
7. The Trumpet Major. (1880)
8. A Lasdicean ; or, The Castle of the De Stancys. (1881)
9. Two on a Tower. (1882)
10. The Mayor of Casterbridge. (1886)
11. The Woodlanders. (1887)
12. Wessex Tales. (1888)
13. A Group of noble Dames. (1891)
14. Tess of the D' Urbervilles. (1891)
15. Life's Little Ironies and A Few Crusted Characters. (1894)
16. Jude of Obscure. (1895)
17. The Well-Beloved : A Sketch of a Temperament. (1897)

(*ii*) Poems

1. Wessex Poems and Other Verses. (1898)
2. Poems of the Past and the Present. (1901)
3. Time's Laughing-stocks and Other Verses. (1909)
4. Satire of Circumstances. (1914)
5. Moments of Vision. (1917)
6. Late Lyrics and Earlier. (1922)

(*iii*) Dramas

1. The Dynasts———It comprised of three parts; the first part was published in 1904; the second in 1906; and the third in 1908. There was a complete and collected edition of all three parts in 1910.
2. The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwell at Tintagel in Lyonnesse. (1923)

(*iv*) Scattered contributions to Periodicals

1. How I built Myself a House ("Chambers' Journal" March, 1865)
2. An Indiscretion in the life of an Heiress (New Quarterly Magazine, 1878)
3. The Romantic adventures of Milkmaid ("Graphic" Summer Number, 1883)
4. The Waiting Supper ("Murray's Magazine." 1888)
5. The Profitable Reading of Fiction ("The Forum" March, 1888)
6. Candour in English Fiction ('New Review' January, 1890)
7. The Science of Fiction (New Review, April, 1891)
8. Why I Don't Write Plays ("Pall Mall Gazette," August. 1892)

Classification of Hardy's Novels

Much ingenuity has been shown and various arguments have been advanced by different critics to solve the complex problem of classifying the novels of Hardy, but the results is not satisfactory. Whether Hardy's view of life was 'pessimistic' or 'optimistic' is still a controversial point among critics, and have little can be gained by classifying his works as Tragedies, or Comedies or Idylls ; but it will be more to the purpose to classify his works on the basis of permanent impression that they leave on their reader's mind. Hardy was a great writer and he put down in black and white his thoughts as they came ; and he had no pre-conceived end before writing them.

Since minds differ as such the rivers do, there can hardly be any ultimate and conclusive classification, and it will be best to see what some of the most eminent of Hardy's critics have to say about the classification of his writings.

Prof Lascelles Abercrombie has divided Hardy's novels into two types, namely, the Dramatic novels and the Epic novels. Those novels of Hardy which contain a single story of a single person, which are shorn of secondary stories and plots, have been included under the heading of Epic novels. His last two novels, namely, Tess of the D' Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure thus fall into this list, because the stories are concerned with the rise and fall in the destiny of a single person, a milkmaid in the one and a student in the other.

In the novels classified as dramatic, just one principal figure does not dominate. On the other hand, our interest is excited by a group of complex characters, whose actions and interests clash with each other. Conflict is the essence

of a dramatic plot, and this predomination of conflict justifies the inclusion of such novels under the heading of Dramatic novels. While the action is complex and the complication is born out of the actions and reactions of many equally important characters, there are thus many secondary plotes in such novels. In the dramatic novel, the author recedes into the background, and it is but rarely that he comes to the fore-front to comment on the action of his characters. Hence there is a preponderance of the dramatic episodes which in themselves carry the plot onwards as opposed to the narrative where the author has a lot to say by way of commentry. Four great novels of Hardy can be classified as Dramatic novels, namely, Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, The Woodlanders, and The Mayor of Casterbridge.

However, in regard to the last named novels, The Mayor of Casterbridge, a difficulty arises, since it can be classed under both the types. It deserves to be classed under the Epic type because we find that one figure, that of the Mayor, as the title implies, is more prominent in the story than others. Further, there are more example of comments by the author in this novel, than in any of the wholly dramatic novels. But the comments in this novels are not individual or personal as they are in Epic novels. Hardy puts his comments into the mouths of his characters in the story, and this is a clever dramatic device to fulfil the requirements of a dramatic novel. He introduces a set of low characters whose function is like that of a chorus in a drama, of phrasing comments on the actions of the characters and the situations in which they move. Thus there is little of personal criticism in the novel and it suits the dramatic type of fiction. In the words of Prof. Abercrombie, if The Mayor of Casterbridge is a drama, it is a drama that approaches the epic type.

Some critics have classified Hardy's novels into tragedies, comedies and idylls. Lionel Johnson classifies them

into three groups, and while he describes two groups as tragedies and idylls, he is at a loss to find a proper word for the third type. He says : "I can find no name, until one word is discovered to express in combination the comic, the ironic, the satiric, the romantic and the extravagant." But a word expressing all this, will not be coined till doomsday and hence we need not want for it.

We perceive that the classification of Prof. Abercrombie is the best that is possible.

Critical Assessment of Hardy's Novels

"Desperate Remedies" :

Desperate Remedies was published anonymously on March 25th, 1871. It stands apart from the Wessex novels, chiefly by virtue of its construction. Much of Hardy's most characteristic work is constructed upon simple plots. Far From the Madding Crowd is hardly more complicated in plot, though the wealth of incidents is greater. The most complicated of Hardy's great novels is the Mayor of Casterbridge, which is, nevertheless, most definitely a novel of character rather than of incidents. And even The Mayor of Casterbridge is simple beside the involutions of Desperate Remedies.

"Under the Greenwood Tree" :

Under the Greenwood Tree was written in the first half of 1871, and finished towards the end of the summer. The original title on the first page of the manuscript was 'The Melistock Quire'; this was deleted because titles from poetry were in fashion at the moment. To most readers the great charm of 'Under the Greenwood Tree' is that it is almost the only one of Hardy's writings which does not contain a tragedy. The episode of Fancy and Mr. Maybold lies on the edge of tragedy, and that is enough. Art should not be always tragic. The pleasure of Under the Greenwood Tree lies in the fact that its end is not tragic.

Under the Greenwood Tree, considered as a work of art, has a freshness about it which Hardy never again achieved. 'Far from Madding Crowd comes nearest, as

a whole ; and the first part of 'A Pair of Blue Eyes' achieves a spontaneous poetry which is admirable ; but upon both of them there lies a deeper shadow, and both of them are clearly works of fiction. 'Under the Greenwood Tree' owes much of its charm to the feeling that the subject of this "rural painting of the Dutch School" in the real life of Dorset as Hardy knew it in his youth. 'Under the Greenwood Tree' contains the seeds of most of the Wessex novels. The Wessex folk are here. The love story his here, not yet touched to tragic issues. The Hardy humour is here. There are touches of the Hardy pathos ; for instance, the closing sentences. Above all, there is the power of conveying the moods of outer Nature, and the deft poetic descriptions of tiny details. Nevertheless, as a whole, 'Under the Greenwood Tree' seems to bear not the stamp of fiction, but the stamp of life seen, remembered, and related by his elders to child.

"A Pair of Blue Eyes" :

'A Pair of Blue Eyes' was written during the later half of 1872. Shortly after the book appeared, Hardy received a letter from Coventry Patmore——a total stranger to him——expressing the view that the story of the novel was not a conception for prose. It was penetrating on the part of Patmore to have seen that the new novelist was really a poet by nature. "A Pair of Blue Eyes" was Tennyson's favourite among Hardy's novels. Although 'A Pair of Blue Eyes" is a less satisfactory book than "Under the Greenwood Tree", it contains passages of great imaginative power. The tragedy in the book is authentic Hardy. But the chief charm of 'A Pair of Blue Eyes' is in the poetry which Patmore recognised ; a poetical quality both in conception and execution which appears on nearly every page.

"Far From the Madding Crowd" :

In "Far From the Madding Crowd" Hardy has come almost to his full stature. The sphere of experiment has been

left behind ; not only does he know what he wishes to do, he has also the technique at command with which to do it. The humour of the Wessex rustic is probably at its best in these pages. Bathsheba is that very characteristic compound called by critics "the Hardy woman". In 'Far From the Madding Crowd' tragedy stops short of the intensity which the latter novels achieve ; indeed there is more pathos than real tragedy. Moreover, it still lacks the power of enveloping the mere plot in an atmosphere more potent than any single incident. However, it made Hardy's name as novelist, and so paved the way for greater things to come.

"The Return of the Native" :

"The Return of the Native" was written during 1877 at Sturminster Newton, in the House "Riverside Villa. As a piece of writing alone. 'The Return of the Native' holds a very high place among the Wessex novels ; its construction would suffice to give it a distinguished place. Writing long afterwards, Hardy said that it was the only one of his novels in which he had consciously striven to observe the unities ; the result is impressive. "The Return of the Native", while it does not attempt to preach as Tess preaches, is the most artistic presentation among the Wessex novels of the theme which was always present in Hardy's consciousness———the them which he heard in the soughing of the trees in Yell' ham Wood :

"Life offers———to deny"

Besides its success, artistically so complete in this vital matter, the faults of 'The Return of the Native' are venial. The worst of them is an excessive and illegitimate use of coincidence. This excessive use of tragic coincidence. This excessive use of tragic coincidence becomes entirely unconvincing and the mind rebels against the artificial burden. Most of the critics regard it as the great weakness of Hardy's novels.

"The Mayor of Casterbridge" :

"The Mayor of Casterbridge" stands by itself among the Wessex novels in several respects. It is, for instance, the only one among them in which, not love, but ambition is the dominant tragic theme. The concentration of all the interest into one single character is not as great as in Tess. But nowhere else did Hardy so clearly bind up the 'tragic mischief' with the personality of the chief character. The manner in which calamity is spun out of Henchard's character gives the book its title to greatness ; for great it is, despite the most faulty construction to be found in Hardy's mature writings. The plot is of such a complexity, and withal so improbable, that the reader's imagination loggles and refuses to co-operate further. And yet, despite all the improbabilities, Hardy's genius asserted itself in the making of Henchard. Among all the heroes in modern literature, he comes nearst to Aristotle's definition of the perfact tragic hero. He reminds us of Ajax of Sophocles. The reality of this man, and the inevitability of his self-made tragedy, grip us and will not let us go. To regard him, in the words of one critic, as 'a single mortal writhing on the toasting fork of Fate' is to miss much of the poignancy of the book, and most of its greatness. He is, indeed, a victim ; as, in some sense, all tragic heroes must be. But the real tragedy of Henchard is that he is made the victim of himself, and he has been, not inaptly, compared with Lear. Mr. Macdowall writes : "Few tragedies in fiction have ended on so consummate a note ; it takes us into the same region as the final simplity of King Lear".

"Tess of the D' Urbervilles :"

'Tess of the D' Urbervilles' is the story of a labourer's daughter, whose father's discovery of descent from a noble family leads to her undoing. Tess is seduce by the son of the wealthy family, which has usurped her name. Thus in the sub-title———A Pure woman Faithfully

Presented ——— Hardy throws a challenge, to the conventions of the Victorian age.

With all its deficiencies, its lack of balance and its sophistical irrelevancies, Tess remains a melodramatic novel, excelling in wild pathos and poetic beauty. This poetic beauty is due to the fact that the work in one which reveals most completely Hardy's unrivalled genius in the description of country life and natural scenery.

"Jude the Obscure" :

"Jude the Obscure' is another famous novel of Hardy. Jude Fawley grows up and works as a stone-mason within sight of the university city, Christminster, whose towers symbolize the intellectual life of his desires. He is tempted by a coarse country girl whom he marries. After her desertion, he meets Sue Bridehead, who leaves her husband for him. It is the situation of Meredith's One of Our Conquerors, with the important difference that Jude and Sue are poor, and helpless in the conflict with law and society. They are conquered without a chance of victory. The crude realism of Arabella's seduction of Jude was attached as an instance of French naturalism, from which English criticism was seeking to protect English readers.

Hardy's Philosophy

Critics have called Hardy's philosophy by various names such as 'determinism' 'fatalism', 'pessimism' etc., although Hardy himself did not want any of such 'isms' to be applied to his novels. Helen Garwood's well-written essay was the earliest attempt at a systematic comparison of Hardy with Schopenhauer. The title of the essay is 'Thomas Hardy: An Illustration of the Philosophy of Schopenhauer'. It states that 'the starting point of Hardy's thought was Schopenhauer', ignoring the fact that Hardy did not read Schopenhauer until he was over-forty. Hardy himself repeatedly disclaims the title of philosopher. He does not select themes to enforce his opinions, or to illustrate his morals. He is too great an artist to do that. He passes down the vale of life, and without a conscious aim he notices certain facts of life. Some individual scenes, and incidents impress themselves upon his mind; he does not seek them, he finds them. He is an artist first and all. He gives impressions rather than arguments. No coherent system based on metaphysical reflection is available in Hardy. He himself says his view of novel :—

> "A novel is an impression, not an argument. A tale-teller writes down how the things of the world strike him, without any intentions, whatever."

Hardy sees life honestly and finds that success is often thwarted. He delves deep into the sea of reality and gets at the stern truth of life that 'happiness is but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain. The heart of man is the arena where great forces ranged on opposite sides wage a titanic war; the Demon and the idol are ever in conflict which ruffles the human calm and happiness. Men mean well and do ill; the good that they would do

they do not do, and the evil that they would not do they do. So all have to suffer and toss on the huge waves of limit-less misery and dire disolution.

However, Hardy is never immoral as some irresponsible critics have charged him, nor is his philosophy meant for moral cowards and psychic wrecks. It is rather meant for the men of courage and patience. Although Henchard has been miserably tormented by the tragic blows of some sinister intelligence, yet his words are, 'my punishment is not greater than I can bear.' In fact, Hardy was opposed to the cheap optimism of his time. The age he lived in saw great economic prosperity and social comforts. People were living in a paradise dripping with milk and honey. Life to them was a kind of Midsummer Night's Dream full of mirth and gaiety. On the bed of life's roses they would sing in ecstatic notes that it was "bliss to be alive and glorious to be young." Philosophers and poets grew complacent and enjoyed seeing the world through the multicoloured glass of romance and fancy. But Hardy was of a different order. He reminded the people of his age of the foul visitations of fate which might descend to rob them of their similing fair faces, through the mouth of Tess who says,

> *"Thy faces shall be no more fair at the fall of thy Fate*
> *For thy life shall fall as leaf and be shed as rain."*

According to Hardy, this is an imperfect world, a sorry scheme of things and as Keats says, a place,

> *"Where men sit and hear each other groan;*
> *Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,*
> *Where youth grows pale, and spectre thin, and dies*
> *Where but to think is to be full of sorrow,*
> *And leaden-eyed despairs;*
> *Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,*
> *Or new love pine at them beyond tomorrow."*

If God is ever somewhere in the world. He is most probably upon the Olympus Mountains from where he hurls in secret thunderbolts, earthquakes and disasters upon humanity and crackles aloud as He destroys the most precious objects. Gods kill us for their sport and we are no better than toys in their hands :

> *"As flies to wanton boys are we to the Gods;*
> *They kill us for their sport.*

To Hardy, God is hardly in heaven and all is wrong with the world. According to him the existence of a merciful God is a false fancy. He imagines 'Godhead dying downwards, brain and eyes gone first.' That which controls the universe is a Force or Will which is neither benevolent nor malevolent, but indifferent. The world is governed by the law of causation.

In Hardy's tragic view of life, a vein of strong fatalism beats in its fullest pulse. Man possesses nothing such as Absolute Free will. He is but a helpless bird imprisoned in the cage of Destiny. He may flutter his wings with an intense longing to wander freely in the fresh blue sky, but also! the bars are too strong to break. The following lines of Omar Khayyam express his philosophy well :

> *"The Moving Finger writes : and having writ,*
> *Moves on ; nor all thy Piety nor Wit*
> *Shall lure it back to cancel half a line*
> *Nor all Fears wash out a word of it."*

Hence his philosophy is called pessimistic. His characters have all the noble aspirations and strength to work upto them but the grave is their goal. As Gray writes,

> *'People surge and sigh*
> *And laughter fails, and greetings die;*
> *Hopes dwindle; yea*
> *Faiths waste away,*
> *Affections, and enthusiasm numb."*

Hardy rules out all possibility of heavenly compensation for the earthly sufferings and losses. Here too, he is opposed to Browning who has faith in the meeting of 'broken arcs in heaven. Men and women wander about the earth, like two halves of a perfect whole, but each waits in cross-obstruseness for the "missing counter-part", and 'out of this maladroit spring anxieties, disappointments, shocks, catastrophes and passing strange destinies."

This philosophy gives us pathos of human existence which is too deep for tears. It originates from the most sublime and chastened reflections. It is a reaction against that idolent and wicked way of optimistic thinking which unhears the 'sad still music of humanity.' Hardy sees the future of mankind in which zest and jubilation of life will be replaced by a growing resignation and sense of indifference towards the aches and ecstasies of life. People will develop a thick crust of intellectual indifference able to withstand shocks and sufferings to which the flesh is heir. Hardy wants a well-proportioned mind——that state of mental equilibrium which accepts the pains and pleasures alike.

We may conclude by saying that though Hardy is never a complete philosopher in the accepted sense of the term, yet he is a thinker, painstaking and realistic often pragmatic, but never explaining exhaustively the obstinate questionings of the soul. He is contented with his reflections on human life.

Hardy's Pessimism

Hardy is usually regarded as a pessimistic writer. His pessimism resembles that of Schopenhauer in bing absolutely candid ; it makes the world as darkly superb and as terribly interesting as a Greek drama. After finishing one of the Hardy's novels, one has all the delight of waking from an impressive but horrible dream. He realizes the real friendliness of the good old earth. It is like coming home from an adequate performance of King Lear. But Hardy's pessimism is sincere. To him the Christian religion and what we call the grace of God have not the slightest shade of meaning. He is as absolute a pagan as though he had written four thousands years before Christ. Hardy's pessimism is the one deep-seated conviction of his whole intellectual process. Destiny or Fate is a kind of insane child, who cackles foolishly at the destruction of the most precious objects. Destiny is whimsical, rather than definitely malicious, for Destiny has not sufficient intelligence even to be systematically bad.

Hardy's pessimism is not in the least personal, nor has it risen from any sorrow or disappointment in his own life. It is both philosophical and temperamental. He cannot see nature in any other way. His pessimism is mainly caused by his deep, manly tenderness for all forms of human and animal life and by an almost abnormal sympathy. His intense love for bird and beast is well-known. He firmly believes that the sport of shooting is wicked, and he has repeatedly joined in practical measures to waken the public conscience on this subject. As a spectator of human history, he sees life as a vast tragedy, with men and women emerging from nothingness, suffering acute physical and mental sorrow, and then passing into

nothingness again. To his sympathetic mind, the creed of optimism is a ribald insult to the pain of humanity. To hear these suffering men and women utter prayers of devotion and sing hymns of adoration to the Power whence comes all their anguish is to him a veritable abdiction of reason and common sense. Though Hardy is pessimist, he has not the least tincture of cynicism. If one analyses his novels carefully, one will see that he seldom shows scorn for his characters ; his contempt is almost exclusively devoted to Fate and Destiny. However dark may be his conception of life, Hardy's sense of humour is unexcelled by his contemporaries in its subtlety of feeling and charm of expression. His rustics, who have long received, and deserved the epithet 'Shakespearian' arouse in every reader harmless and wholesome delight. Hardy's laughter reminds one of what Carlyle said of Shakespeare : "it is like sunshine on the deep sea."

To the normal mind, life, not being a solid block, but a continuous flux, is neither to be viewed from an entirely pessimistic, nor from an entirely optimistic standpoint ; it is an affair of compensations. Great art, the art of Sophocles or of Shakespeare, does not leave our minds impressed by a pessimistic conception of existence. It represents the flux of all things, the cessation of pain and grief as well as of joy and pleasure. It has its compensating values. The effect of tragedy upon the mind is ultimately one of relief at the cessation of pain. The significance of tragedy is not merely tragic. It leaves upon our mind the idea of compensation and readjustment ; and when literature ceases to have this effect upon us, it ceases to be great literature ; it is no longer representative, but didactic. This is an objection which may be urged in all fairness against the art of Hardy. His nature is one which responds instinctively to tragedy, and this responsiveness to one particular aspect of life has been cultivated to the neglect of the other aspect. But here a word of caution. Hardy's pessimism springs from his sympathy with mankind, from the depth and richness of his emotional nature. He is imbued with the spirit of a human and a personal sympathy.

Faith, hope, and love are satirized by circumstances, or broken beneath the passing feet of the years which "like great black oxen tread the world." Hardy is painfully alive to this discouraging situation. Dealing with this aspect of Hardy's pessimism, a critic has said : "He (Hardy) is pessimistic about the governance of the universe but not about human beings." He is not like Swift, who presents human beings as Yahoos. He has given us fascinating portraits of men and women. He is disgusted with the malicious force which governs the universe, and reduces human beings to pathetic situations.

But Hardy's pessimism is seldom depressings. His characters face the hostile circumstances with heroic fortitude and courage. Destiny may seem pitiless and cruel, but the nobility of the characters in confronting it with dauntless courage and sympathy towards one another evokes a compensating admiration.

The Role of Fate and Chance in Hardy's Novels

In Hardy's novels fate plays a predominant part. His characters are mere puppets in the hands of a malignant fate which is out to thwart them in their efforts and rob them of any chance of happiness. David Cecil has aptly remarked : "A struggle between man on the one hand and, on the other, an omnipotent and indifferent Fate —— that is Hardy's interpretation of human situation." Like dramas, the novels of Hardy turn on a conflict ; but the conflict is not, as in most English novels and dramas, between one man and another, or between man and an institution. Man, according to him, is the creature of circumstances, a pawn in the game played by destiny. Destiny subjects him to a number of external influences, the sum-total of which makes up his environment, and this plays a larger part in the development of his characters. Hence tragedy in Hardy's novels arises, as Grimsditch writes, 'from the interplay of human emotions and the conflict between the aspirations of conscious man and the absolute law of unconscious fate."

Now as Fate is an abstraction, it becomes essential that it should be personified in some particular incarnation so that it may be able to play an active part in the tragedy of human drama. This necessity leads Hardy to embody Fate in various forms. Sometimes it appears as a natural force. Henchard's plans for making himself rich are brought to nothing by a bad harvest ; the weather takes the part of Fate here. Sometimes it embodies itself as some inborn weakness of character. Jude's life is ruined because he has been endowed at birth, through no wish of his own, with an intensity of sexual temperament which he cannot control, and which is his undoing.

In addition to nature and personal character, it is chiefly in two guises, namely chance and love, in which the forces of Fate in Hardy's novels incarnate themselves. Of these, chance is the more typical. In no other novels does chance exercise such a prominent influence on the course of events. Hardy has been blamed for this ; and no doubt he does sometimes over-do it. But to condemn his use of chance altogether is to misunderstand his view of life. We are witnessing a battle between man and destiny. Destiny is a mysterious force ; we do understand its nature or its intention. And we cannot therefore anticipate what it will do. In consequence, its acts always show themselves in the guise of inexplicable, unexpected blows of chances. Man is working to one, end, Destiny to another. These ends may meet or they may not. Either way, it is Destiny who decides what shall happen. Man cannot modify the Will of Destiny. It is significant how many of Hardy's plots turn on the revelation of a past action coming to light after being kept secret for some time. It is by chance that the actions which are forgotten come to light and play a ruin on the life of characters. To the characters themselves the past action may be dead, they may have put their past actions behind them. But they cannot escape their consequences. For the actions has become an instrument which they have presented to Destiny and which Destiny may use against them at any time. It is seen that in the end of his novels some one who is almost forgotten returns and completes the tragedy. In 'the Mayor of Casterbridge' it is the sudden return of Newson which deprives Henchard of his last object of hope and happiness and ruins his life for good.

The second important form in which Hardy incarnates Fate is love. All Hardy's novels are love-stories. Love is the pre-dominating motive attracting his characters. One or twice, he presents us with a hero moved by other desires but in the end all of them are seen entrapped in the passion of love. Indeed, it is very natural that love should dominate Hardy's scene. Man, cast into a dark

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and unsatisfying world, thirst for happiness. The happiness promised by love is the most universal symbol of this thirst that Hardy could have chosen. For every sort of human being in every sort of circumstance responds to the call of love ; in love's joy he finds a note of happiness that he hopes will free him from the burden of human lot. But, alas, his hope is vain. For love, instead of being a benevolent spirit, consoling and helping man in his struggle with the inhuman forces, is itself an expression of these forces. Love, as conceived by Hardy, is "the Lord of terrible aspect," a blind, irresistible power seizing on human beings whether they will or not, and always bringing ruin on them. His men and women would find it possible to walk the hard way of life from the cradle to the grave resignedly enough ; they might endure life fairly easily even if they do not enjoy it, were it not for this storm which sweeps them off their feet, only to throw them down again, broken and despairing. In the 'Mayor of Casterbridge' when love (of Elizabeth and Farfrae) does achieve a happy ending, it is shadowed with sadness. It is a minor key, a twilight serenity, that closes the 'occasional interlude of happiness in the general drama of pain'. Chance plays a vital role in the tragic vicissitudes of Tess. At the very threshold of life, she meets the wrong man. A few days before she marries Angel Clare, she pushes under the door of his bedroom a written confession, which slips out of sight under the carpet where it remains consealed until found by Tess on wedding morning. On a Sunday, Tess tramps fifteen miles to the personage of the elder Clare to seek protection ; there is no answer to her ring at the door, for the family is at church. At just the wrong time she stumbles upon Alec once more. A letter she despatches to Angel in Brazil is delayed,

and he reaches home a few days too late. Similar examples can be quoted from his other novels.

We find in Hardy's novels an unquestionable power ——— conscious or unconscious, personal or impersonal ——— that hampers and hinders the doings of man. This power is nothing but Fate. Hardy, to say the least, overindulges his delight in presenting the "impishness of circumstances".

Hardy's Approach to Nature

Just as Wordsworth rose up in revolt to overthrow the false doctrine of Nature as enunciated by Pope, so Hardy rose against Wordsworth, to prove that his conception of Nature was but one-sided. Wordsworth saw only the benign and noble aspect of Nature. This was a sentimental conception, as opposed to the realistic conception that was to be put forward by Hardy. Wordsworth saw only the brighter side of Nature ; he saw everything in Nature as constructive, and failed to see its destructive aspects. He was a poet of joy and optimism. But Hardy ridiculed the holy plant of Nature and tried to show not only 'what man hath made of man' but also 'what nature hath made of man.' What was then the formulative influence that made Hardy differ in such a marked degree from Wordsworth's conception of Nature in particular and that of Romantics in general ? The genius of Hardy flourished in an age which was governed by the disturbing contemplation of an endless series of competing truths. The apparently solid foundations which had sustained the Victorian Age began to crumble under the rude shakes given by the new competing truths, and the popular idealism receded before the impatience of the new generation. Drawin's epoch-making book The Origin of the Species and its sequel The Decent of Man exercised a profound influence on the whole of English thought, in the later nineteenth century. It preached that not only was the origin of the species totally different from the one depicted in the religious books like the Bible, but the life was no smooth sailing ever since it began and there was always a struggle for existence. Thereafter follows the natural corollary of the survival of the fittest. Hence there is no holy plan, no peace in Nature for Hardy. He finds in

it an intermittant and unceasing struggle for existence, a struggle that is ruthless, barbarous, a fight to the last where the ruling motto is "might is right," where the weak get no chance but are totally annihilated, where the nourishing of the stronger is derived from the life blood of the weaker. Nature is devoid of sympathy, it gives no hope, it fosters no bonds of kinship and love. It does not take care of the affairs of her children like a loving mother. It is blind to birth, blind to existence and blind to death. It has no time to look into the affairs of man, because there is a ceaseless and competitive struggle within itself. Nature according to Hardy is cruel in its unrelenting and unceasing struggle for existence. In one of his poems, Hardy shows that being fed up with the unrest arising out of the struggle for existence in humanity, he would go to wood, in the lap of Nature and derive some solace and comfort from the observation of the holy plans and ways of Nature. But he finds the same competition and struggle in Nature. Hardy ends the above-mentioned poem in the following vein, clearly stating that no solace is to be found in Nature :

"Since, then, no grace I find
Taught me of trees,
Turn I back to my kind,
Worthy as these.
There at least smiles abound,
There discourse thrills around,
There, now and then, are found,
Life———loyalties."

Hardy, thus, not only refute Wordsworth's conception of Nature, but clearly advocates that humanity is at least far better than Nature, as "There, now and then," are found, "Life-loyalties." He exhorts men to avoid Nature and to seek the society of their fellow beings, since Nature is totally unresponsive, or at least responds only in an ironic way to the feeling of man. He fears that apathy and blindness of Nature may contaminate the somewhat loyal

nature of man. He does not share the optimism and the complacent outlook of the Romantics, as regards Nature and this breakaway is Hardy's originality. As Edmund Gosse says, "He has lifted the veil of Isis, and found beneath it not a benevolent mother of man, but the tomb of an illusion."

In an age when poets like George Meredith were portraying Nature as intellectualized or like Robert Browning as idealized with only a few exceptions such as Tennyson who indeed spoke of Nature as "red in tooth and claw", Hardy was the only man who painted Nature as it actually is. He refrained from taking a subjective view of Nature's works ; on the other hand, his approach to Nature was objective, and his depiction of natural scenes real and forceful.

Hardy has always been in love with Nature, with the instinctive, spontaneous, unregarded aspects of Nature. The progress of his art consists in bringing this element of nature, into ever closer contact with the rigid routine of life. His intimacy with Nature is almost uncanny. Nature is not merely a background in his stories, it is often an active agent. There are striking characters in 'The Return of The Native' but the greatest character in the book is Egdon Heath. In 'Tess of the D' Urbervilles' the intercourse between man and Nature is set forth with amazing power. In 'The Woodlanders' the trees seem like separate individuals. In 'Jude the Obscure', even more than in Tess, Nature plays a sort of ironical chorus ; the most casual circumstances fall into the dismal harmony of fate. The humour which glances through most of Hardy's novels———a humour which is never boisterous and not always genial, but still akin to the buoyancy of life———is here subdued to an undercurrent of grim mockery.

Hardy makes scene serve a deeper purpose than that of mere decoration. Egdon Heath, in The Return of the Native, typifies the enduring force of Nature, against which man vainly pits his strength. Only those of the characters

who accept it and live nearest to it, survive, while Eutacia Vye, who represents opposition to it, brings ruins upon herself. Hardy uses scene to reflect the mood of his story, yet never in such a way as to suggest the 'pathetic fallacy' which interprets Nature as sympathetically responsive to man. Meredith uses Nature to exalt his characters ; Hardy to reduce them to the inconsequence of vermin.

In the depiction of natural phenomena, Hardy is extraordinarily minute and delicate. His senses are instruments of rare precision. A strong characteristic of Hardy is the wide-awakeness of his senses to external impressions. An average intelligent observer notes small things and straightway forgets most of them, while the possesser of a highly trained memory retains a greater number in his mind, more or less isolated and disconnected. But an artist of Hardy's power not only absorbs minute details and changes in the world around him, but also links them up with human personality with consummate skill. His ears are open to every slight sound ; he sees (and makes us see) every delicate shade of colour, and he constantly creates the illusion in the reader's mind that he is in the actual spot described. Cazamian has aptly remarked ; "Hardy has most loving described the elementary, grand and sad aspects of Nature."

Such then is Hardy's view of Nature and it is quite original. All his works are full of it because he is fond of rurality and has no kinship with urbanity. His descriptions of Nature as already shown are not only an exact word replica but are supplemented by his observations and comments, and these are what sender his view of Nature unique, raising it almost to the level of a philosophy, though Hardy professes to be no philosopher.

Hardy's Characterisation

The range of Hardy's characters is limited on account of his philosophy and his attachment of Wessex. David Cecil has rightly pointed out that his (Hardy's) memorable characters have a family likeness. His heroes are all drawn on the same model. Gabriel Oak in 'Far From the Madding Crowd', John Loveday in 'The Trumpet Major', Giles Winterborne in 'The Woodlanders' are men of similar nature. Henchard in 'The Mayor of Casterbridge,' though lacking their inexpressible tenderness and purity of heart, is related to them in passive fortitude; and Clym Yoebright in 'The Return of the Native' joins their family. The disciplinary influence of country life supplies one of those grandly constructive ideas which give to the Wessex novels their singular unity and consistency. It underlies the whole of his characterization. While Hardy's heroes are countrymen in whom the dumb passiveness of the peasantry under affliction rises into a moral grandeur of resignation, his men of the meaner sort are either townmen or persons of urban culture. And when Hardy deliberately attempts to break away into a new type he fails in the end to make it intrinsically different from the old. For instance, Sue in 'Jude the Obscure' is intended to be a portrait of the advanced woman of Hardy's day——neurotic and intellectual. Painstakingly he makes her talk at length about the marriage problem and the difficulties of religious belief; but her conversation does not ring true——it is not the expression of her personality. The basic structure of her characters is conceived on old lines. Under her Ibsentic skin Sue is the sister of Anne and Bathsheba. Brought up in a peasant community, he can only successfully vitalise characters of a peasant-like simplicity. To draw the self-conscious intellectual needs

a deeper acquaintance with sophisticated human nature than Hardy possessed.

The best of his works are ranged under the title of 'novels of character and environment.' And thus, at the word 'environment' we are carried off at once to his native Wessex. The intense feeling of locality which engrosses Hardy comes from no mere love of the picturesque, from no amiable interest in topographical exactitude. He belongs by birth and temperament to the soil of England. He sees life with a clearer vision when it is lived upon the heath and in the woodlands, which he knows and loves so well. The perfect blending of men with inanimate things is always before Hardy's eyes. In Far From the Madding Crowd the barn is natural to the shearers, and the shearers are in harmony with the barn. His country-side is the home not only of industry, but of those primitive beliefs now rashly dismissed as 'superstitions.' In the world of his painting the 'forecaster' stills foretells the weather at a price ; the quack-salver vends his cheap cures, or offers for sale the love-philtres.

In Hardy's novels, it is difficult to dissociate the people from their environment ; and, more than this, by a fine and most distinctive gift of psychological suggestiveness, we read the colour and nature of their surroundings in their habits, speech, and character. Egdon Heath pervades the lives of the peasantry in The Return of the Native ; Giles Winterborne and Marty South in 'The Woodlanders' belongs to the woodland places. We could not transfer characters from one book to the other without a sense of incongruity. We are conscious of an essential affinity between the atmospheric tone of natural environment and the inmost personality of characters in the tale. The spirit of a strong and patient passivity and melancholy is written in the lives of all the more outstanding characters of Hardy's novels. His reading of peasant life is intimate and realistic, not the clever reconstruction of the young novelist who has worked up

his local colour by a few week's stay on the spot, and writes to show us how the other half of the world lives.

Meredith draws his characters from the walks of life where men and women are most highly complex, where instinct and impulse are subordinated to intelligence. Hardy, on the other hand, lays his scene in the country, among simple, instinctive, even primitive human beings, and violent crashes of tragic coincidence are his stock-in-trade. Even when Merdith's heroes are crushed, they are not crushed. But this is not the case with Hardy. The very nature of the world is indifferent to man's desires and aspirations; the turn of circumstances even suggests a malignant spirit at work against him. The element of healthful, hopeful combat Hardy refuses to admit. His heroes fall because they can't come to close quarters with their foes. For his more developed characters, Hardy uses the psychological method of George Eliot. The portrait and interpretation of Eustacia Vye in The Return of the Native is as elaborate as George Eliot's unfolding of the personality of Lydgate in 'Middlemarch.' To such characters, however, Hardy denies the importance which George Eliot and Meredith attribute to them. On the contrary, Hardy's intellectual bespeak the failure of intelligence to control human action; indeed, their interference is usually fatal. It is the product of education, Angel Clare, who brings Tess to destruction; and Jude's intellectual striving, powerless against the natural woman in such different forms as Arabella and Sue Bridehead, in the end gives a peculiar bleakness to his own fate.

But if his best characters are not subtle and complex, the art that depicts his characters assuredly it; for he can record the minutest fluctuations of emotional experience and make them real and actual; it is this power which brings home to us with sureness the vital, full-blooded and life-like characters. If his novels are simple in construction, Hardy spares no pains of complexity in drawing his character. His women especially stand out with a clarity and personal distinction which is not easy to match in

modern literature. Eustacia, Bathsheba, Tess, Lucetta—— they are one and all alive and easily recognizable.

Desmond Hawkins has levelled a serious charge against Hardy's characters. He says : "Strictly, the main characters ———Tess Jude, Henchard and the rest——— are not in any ordinary sense human beings. They are not recorded from life but invented from the novelist's experience of life. They contain, as it were, more of life than is normally the lot of any one person. They are great vessels of human passion and suffering, intensified, emphasized and made articulate in a more than human degree. They are portraits rather than photograph." But this opinion is lop-sided and deficient in truth. Against this statement, we have the word of another critic, who says : "His nobler characters, whether of men or woman, are all the more inspiring because they are never faultless ; they are always "of like passions with ourselves."

Hardy has limitations in respect of characterization. But when he chooses a subject fully within these limitations, when he is drawing natives of the Wessex country with deep feeling, he is uncomparable. His figures are made of solid flesh and blood.

Hardy's Plots

On a review of the works of the earlier Greek poets Aristotle concluded that dramatists were able sooner to arrive at excellence in diction and characterization than in the construction of the fable; and English literature, modern as well as ancients, is, by it main defect in narrative art, a lamentable proof of his assertion. From Spenser to Browning and George Eliot, the weak point has been the structure of plot. Ben Jonson was one of the first English writers to compose plays with all the incidents regularly interwoven and all the part interdependent; and for this reason he was considered by some critics to be a better dramatist than Shakespeare. Being, however, vastly inferior to several of his contemporaries in the creation and development of the character and the genius for dramatic poetry, he failed to excite a general feeling for form and so establish it as a tradition binding upon later writers. Happily, the sense of literary form was, to some extent, popularised in England during the eighteenth century. The less of the sense of literary form was part of price paid for the magnificent results of the Romantic movement. Coleridge, Hazlitt and many other critics were the collaborators in innumerable badly constructed works of the last century. But this is not the case with Hardy. He has been universally praised for his skill in handling the plot of his novels. It is said that his early training in the profession of architecture greatly influenced the technique of his novels. Certainly his plots have the symmetry and harmonious proportions of a gorgeous and beautiful building which gives us an aesthetic satisfaction of a high and lasting order.

The intellectual delight that we receive in the perusal of his books comes largely from the architectonics of his

literary structure. One never losses sight of Hardy the architect. In purely constructive skill he has surpassed all his contemporaries. His novels———with the exception of Desperate Remedies and Jude the Obscure——— are as complete and as beautiful to contemplate as a sculptor's masterpiece. They are finished and noble works of art, and give the same kind of pleasure to the mind as any superbly perfect outline. Hardy himself firmly believes that the novel should first of all be a story : that it should not be a thesis, nor a collection of reminiscences. He insists that a novel should be as much of a whole as a living organism, where all the parts———plot, dialogue, character and scenery———should be fitly framed together, giving the single impression of a completely harmonious building. One simply cannot imagine him writing in the manner of a German novelist, with absolutely no sense of proportion ; nor like the mighty Tolstoy who steadily sacrifices art on the altar of reality ; nor like the great English school represented by Thackeray, Dickens and Trollops, whose charm consists in their intimacy with the reader. Hardy's work shows a sad sincerity, the noble austerity of the true artist, who feels the dignity of his art, and is quite willing to let it speak for itself.

In construction, his stories are stern, even to rigidity. It is not for nothing that he passed his youth in the study and practice of architecture. His plots are conceived as symmetric designs which record the quirks of an inscrutable fatality ; they consist, as it were, mainly of misunderstanding, thwarted reconciliations, and letters gone fatally astray. His fable, as the critics call it, is expounded by no more than or four characters, whose actions are directed by the harsh necessity of fate. They are the playthings of Gods, as the Greeks would have said it, or of destiny. In vain they struggle against the doom which hangs over them. 'We are but thistle-globes in Heaven's high gales,' says Napoleon in The Dynasts, and that line might serve as a motto for the best of Hardy's works. Tess, poor wounded name, is driven to her destruction by a fate which she is

not strong enough to control. Henchard, the Mayor of Casterbridge, is the victim of his own strength and insolent triumph. Bathsheba, with no evil intent, unseats the reason of good man, and falls herself a victim to a fickle rascal. In Jude the Obscure, instinct and intellect engage in an unequal combat. Jude fails in all the ambitions of his life because he cannot sustain upon his weak shoulders the battle of the new against the old. For this submission to Fate Hardy has been called a pessimist. The charge is unjust as well as irrelevant. A man is not a pessimist because he perceives the obvious truth that all is not cakes and ale in this world. A cheerful, determination to look upon what is commonly called the bright side of things, means no more than a wilful blindness. In any cause Hardy has seen life with an impartial eye, and has told us what he has discovered in it.

Hardy's plots are extraordinarily remarkable for their simplicity and coherence. There is always a sequence of cause and effect in the description of scenes and events. Nothing is superficial in the plot : what appears incongruous at first sight will on a serious contemplation turn out to be highly significant from the standpoint of plot-construction. We do not have, of course, the 'economy of plot-construction' of the type of Henry James. Many a novels can be written out of the substance of a single novel of Hardy. But this is due to the fact that the creative powers of Hardy were immensely rich and fruitful. He used vast materials for his novels and with great skill and craftsmanship compressed them into short compass. He possessed wide experience of human life and knew to exploit a single situation to its fullest possibilities. He was always something of a craftsman and builder. He built the vast structure of his novels with as many details as can be discerned in some huge Gothic mansion. Duffin rightly observes that Hardy's novels have plots which are self-supporting organic wholes and 'however great play of an external fate may be, the life and motive which is at the centre of each is essentially psychological.'

Referring to the plot-construction of Hardy, Cazamian has remarked : "His plots grow out of elementry passions : ambition, love, greed, jealousy and the thirst for knowledge; and the springs which move them are psychological. More and more as he progresses in his career, Hardy tends to shift the construction of his novels to the inner world ; he writes a moral drama, shows us a conflict of contradictory wills, guided themselves by feelings." The character study may be clever, the weaving of the plot ingenious, but very rarely are we made to feel an inherent and necessary relationship between the two. To bring the two together as the corresponding terms of a synthesis is the perfect work of the dramatist and novelist. A very general criticism of Hardy's novels in the improbability of their plot. Walter Allen has given a very appropriate answer to this charge. He says ; "He (Hardy) is intent to show that the stars in their courses fight against the aspiring, the man or woman who would rise above the common lot through greatness of spirit, of ambition, or passion. Here his problem was difficult indeed, and it is not surprising he never solved it. For the universe itself to become suddenly hostile to man could only be shown through the working of what may be called the freak coincidence. It is silly to blame Hardy for the emphasis he places on coincidence ; simply, he belived in coincidence. Plot in Hardy is his attempt to express the significance of the great design in purely human terms. Failure was almost inescapable, for Hardy, as a man of his time and place, had no completely adequate myth through which his view of the nature of things could be bodied forth."

Hardy's Humour

In spite of the gloomy and pessimistic picture of life presented by Hardy is his novels, he is not completely devoid of humour. Hardy's humour is mainly provided by his minor characters who are simple country-folk, and whose part in his novel is that of the chorus. This chorus provides also the chief occasion for Hardy's humour. Humour is not the quality that one might expect to find in him, so grand and so gloomy as he is. But it is there alright. Nor is it incongruous with the rest of his achievement. It is rustic; it is elemental; it is grotesque; it is gothic; it is traditional. Like the characters who are its subject, it descends directly from Shakespeare and the Elizabethans. Here, again, it differentiates his pictures of the rural scene from that of the George Eliot school. In the first place, it is not satirical. Hardy does not make us laugh by the brilliant penetration with which he exposes his character's foibles and follies. His are the jokes and anecdotes that enliven the evenings in cottage and village inn, and his primary aim is simply to make us laugh. The mood which inspires his characters is simple, genial enjoyment——the countrymen's slow relish of the absurd for its own sake. The main themes are the themes of most country humours——the native credibility of yokels and of crusted old eccentrics. We are made to laugh at the immemorial butts of village life——garrulous, reminiscent old grand fathers, henpecked husbands, ludicrous, timid simpletons, and the incongruity between the facts of life and the countrymen's ignorant comments on them. Hardy's mode of conveying this humour is also Elizabethan. It is leisurely——there is nothing sharp or slick about it——and it is adorned with a flourish of whimsical fancy. Now and again there is a touch of the

grave-digger's in Hamlet about it———of the Elizabethan taste for the macabre.

Hardy's humour is verbal, dependent for its effect upon the particular words he uses. That poetic strain which was intrinsic to his imaginative process gives him a delight in speech, so that his humour has a literary quality denied to more sophisticated humour. This is an outstanding quality of Hardy's humour.

Compton-Rickett has made a very illuminating statement in respect of Hardy's humour. He says: "Pre-occupied as the novelist is with the tragic aspects of life, yet he illustrates once again the truth of Carlyle's saying, that 'Humour is a sympathy with the seamy side of thing.' As a rule the sympathy is too acute for laughter, but it often finds expression in irony———that half-way house between comedy and tragedy; but in his earlier books especially, where the vital joy of youth proves to strong at times for melancholy fatalism, the merely ridiculous aspects of life about him are recorded with delightful particularity. What better material for this than the rustic type that Hardy knew so well. Here, he reminds us strongly at times of George Eliot's methods in The Mill on The Floss and Silas Marner; but Hardy's rustics are truer to nature; they are less intellectualized."

Save when dealing with his rustic characters, Hardy's humour usually takes the form of irony, he is too much of a realist to take pleasure in caricature, too little of the moralist to make effective use of satire: and his natural reserve tends to make him grimly ironical. His books abound in the irony of circumstances, *e.g.*, the double pledging under the tree in A Pair of Blue Eyes; the proposal scene in The Hand of Ethelberta with the lovers in different rooms: the power behind things wears always a mocking smile to Hardy. At its best the irony is very fine, and sometimes, as in Two on a Tower, it has a light, exquisite flavour that Anatole France himself could not have bettered.

Local Colour in Hardy's Novels

Since the end of the eighteenth century, European literature has been showing a distinctly marked and heightened sense of locality. The fact that Milton was Londoner does not have much effect on our appreciation of 'Paradise Lost' but the fact that Wordsworth was a talesman of the Lake District, is all important for the understanding of 'The Prelude.' Sir Walter Scott was the first great novelist, who made use of this modern feeling for the character of places In his 'Waverley novels' he produced a body of prose-fiction which is not only a series of great and moving stories, but also a complete portraiture of Scotland that he knew and loved so well. But whereas Wordsworth was limited in his treatment of Cumberland, for he had taken only a few peasants for his work, Scott displayed merely a historical interest in the 'Waverley novels.' It was left only for Hardy to make a complete and comprehensive study, and to produce an undying picture of the region where he was born and which he loved with a poet's passion. The 'Wessex novel's of Hardy are the only truly 'local' novels that can be compared with the 'Waverley novels' for richness and variety, for sincerity and strength, for moral and imaginative power. Although these two series of novels differ significantly in their method of art and the general outlook of their authors, it is doubtless that both of them acquire a high measure of success in expressing the spirit of a locality without lapsing into a narrow provincialism. The creator of 'Tess of D' Urbervilles' by his profound and sympathetic understanding of the local and the individual succeeded as much as the creator of Jeane Deans in raising it to the sphere of the universal and the ideal.

Hardy's regional novels deal with the life of a particular region of England which is known as Wessex. Every

event takes place in this region. People come from outside, yet the action of the drama rotates through out about this Wessex country. Really Hardy's eighteen books of prose-fiction deal in the main with one part of England. For this district he revived the ancient name of Wessex, which had been long forgotten by the people except a few historians and antiquarians. The Wessex of Hardy has not very clearly defined limits. But it centre and the true home of Hardy's art is the native country of Dorset. Dorest is one of the most historic of English countries. In the nineteenth century it was one of the most conservative and 'backward' areas. When Hardy was a boy it was still hardly touched by the great industrial revolution that had transformed the Midlands and the North. It was a country of sleepy old towns and secluded villages, where customs handed down by tradition from remote antiquity still survived, and where the social fabrics had undergone little change for centuries. "The old age of the world lingered upto the middle of the reign of Victoria in this sheltered corner of South-Western England.' And Hardy knew Wessex as Scott knew the Border Country. He had studied it with the enthusiasm of a poet and with the scientific precision of antiquarian and a social historian. He knows the Wessex landscape not as a tourist knows it, but as a farmer or labourer might know it, if he were gifted with the sensitiveness of an artist. Hardy shows a knowledge of a local history and antiquities that few professed Dorest antiquarians can boast. He knows every detail of the business of the former, the shepherd, the wood-man, the dairyman, and all the rustic occupations of the Wessex country side.

It is very significant to note that the key-stone on which the entire arch of Hardy's literary production is built is his deep and sympathetic understanding of the life and character of the Wessex people, the farm-hands and servants, dairy-maids, shepherds, and labourers, as well as the gentry, and the country tradesmen, parsons, and doctors. English country-folk have appeared in many books from the Middle Ages onward, but generally they have been in

the background, as they are in Shakespeare's plays and Fielding's novels. They are introduced only with a view to providing a sort of comic relief to serious plots. It is in the Wessex novels that for the first time in English literature, a great author deliberately choses English peasant types for his heroes and heroines. He neither caricatures them nor idealizes them, but presents them as they are, showing at the same time how the simple obscure English village life can provide a gallery of characters that is truly Shakespearian in its richness and variety. It is a gallery that includes the noble and steadfast Gabriel Oak, the unspeakably patient and long-suffering Marty South, Michael Henchard with his elemental strength and energy, Tess with her exquisite spiritual beauty, and Jude Fawley with his terrible ambitions and aspirations. Hardy's art may be said to have carried out in prose-fiction the programme that Wordsworth proposed for poetry : "to choose incidents and situations from common life and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as possible, in a selection of the language really used by men, and at the same time to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect."

Hardy devoted himself heart and soul to the study of life and manners of the simple village-folk. He had no patience with modern civilization and with the artificial life of the people living in great fashionable cities. He created in his novels a world of only limited interests and professions belonging chiefly to the country-side life of Wessex. David Cecil, a famous critic of Hardy, remarks : "His scene is too narrow. Many people in the world are not Wessex countrymen, and many of the most important types of people; statesmen, for example, or artists, or philosophers, or men of the world. You will not find these people in Hardy's books. Nor do you find any account of the sort of worlds in which they live. The subtleties of intellectual life, the complexities of public life , the sophistications of social life, these do not kindle Hardy's imagination to work. In fact, it is no good going to him for a

picture of the finer shades of civilized life or of the diverty of human scene as a whole. The life he portrays is life reduced to its basic elements. People in Hardy's books are born, work hard for their living, fall in love and die : they don't do anything else. Such a life limits in its turn the range of their emotions. There is comedy in Hardy's books, and poetry and tragedy ; but his comedy is limited to the humours of rustic life, his poetry is the poetry of the folk-song, his tragedy is the stark and simple tragedy of the poor."

The tragedy in all the great Wessex novels of Hardy results from a conflict between the old-fashioned simple Wessex folk whose ideas and outlook have remained unchanged for centuries, and the new spirit of the modern word with its scepticism and an overwhelming complexity of ideas and interests. In a half humorous passage Hardy himself contrasts 'dear delightful Wessex where the honest squires, tradesmen, parsons and clerks and people still praise the Lord with one voice for his best of all possible worlds' with the "new and strange spirit without like that which entered the valley of Ezekiel's vision and made the dry bones move." In fact, the theme of the Wessex novels is to a great degree the tragic result of the impact of this 'new and strange spirit' on the lives of Wessex men and women. Sometimes this conflict is seen in the outward and economic changes as it is in the case of the pitiful ejection of Tess and her family from their cottage after the death of her father, or in the case of the intrusion of Farfrae's modern business methods into the sleepy world of the Casterbridge commerce. But much more subtle and far-reaching effects are shown arising out of the relations between the old-fashioned simpleminded Wessex folk, and the more complex characters of modern civilization. This a theme that seems to have haunted Hardy's imagination. Again and again he shows us the tragic consequences that ensure from the contact of a Sergeant Troy, a Dr. Fitzpiers, or a Lucetta Templeman with unsophisticated straightforward country folk like Gabriel Oak, Giles Winterborne

and Michael Henchard respectively. Such conflicting relationships reveal a kind of tragic intensity which is all the more stirring when we know that the chief actors involved in them are often unconscious thereof.

Though the term 'regional' appears to imply a limited and narrow view of human life, it is a splendid triumph and achievement of Hardy that nowhere in the series of Wessex novels do we come across narrowness of outlook or sympathy. The treatment of local colour by Hardy has been rendered on a universal scale. He has achieved what the sophisticated writers could never obtain in their novels. In other writers of regional character, decorations of life often deceive the observer and a vivid knowledge and representation of life is defeated. But Hardy, by returning to the simple, primitive and unspoiled Wessex, observed life from the closest quarters and depicted it with great faithfulness to facts. He raised the dignity of the function of fiction by imparting to his works an intellectual and spiritual atmosphere of greatest sublimity and solemnity. His Wessex novels represent a vast human drama painted on a universal canvas. It is this element of universality which distinguishes them from other novels of regional or local character and raises them to a high rank in the field of English fiction. David Cecil has remarked : "For all that Hardy makes such play with the local characteristics of his scene, yet always he penetrates beneath them to those universal facts of human existence of which this scene is only one example. In spite of the loving exactitude with which he details the characteristic features of Wessex life, he never lets us forget that this Wessex life is part of the life of the whole human race and is inextricably connected with it."

Hardy's Attitude Towards Marriage And Sex Relations

In the novels of Hardy, we find stories that are full of misery and suffering. The cause of all this, according to the novelist, is that society is not what it should be. He pondered deeply over social questions embracing domestic life such as marriage, motherhood and chastity, and came to the conclusion that the chief cause of misery in life is maladjustment in marriage, which is the most vital institution in society. The multiplication of society and the up-bringing of its members and domestic happiness, all depend upon an ideal marriage.

All his novels, particularly the last two, 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure' deal with the problem of marriage at length. In these novels, Hardy seems to hold that marriage is not meant simply for the satisfaction of sexual appetite, it has a much higher end to fulfil. Hence the marriage which is the result of 'love at first sight' is not a good marriage and it will not last and stand the test of time. Man is rational creature, and for him also for his counterpart, marriage means more than physical union. Hardy believes that marriage should not take place between two persons until they have studied and understood each other well and they are sure that they will be able to accommodate each other, not only in their sexual relations, but in their ideas and tastes and attitudes also.

But human beings can never be sure of the dark future, and circumatances may crop up when the married couple find that in spite of having taken a long period in their courtship to understand each other, they have

really failed in their endeavour, and the continuation of their married life will bring nothing but unhappiness. In such cases Hardy advocates dissolution of marriage bonds. He maintains that when married life becomes irksome and unhappy for one of the couple then that person must have the right to free himself or herself from his or her partnership. This is clearly illustrated in The Mayor of Casterbridge. Henchard who seems to believe that he had made a mistake in marrying Susan, is willing to sell her if anyone will take her off his hands. This is how Hardy puts the situations: "A marriage should be dissolved as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties ——being then essentially no marriage". And he actually sells his wife.

Let us here not fail to quote one of his most famous passages from Tess of the D'Urbervilles, which again reveals his attitude towards hasty and romantic marriages. He says: "In the ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things, the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving. Nature does not often say 'See'! to her poor creature, at a time when seeing can lead to happy doing; or reply 'Here'! to a body's cry of where'? till the hide and seek has become an irksome, outworn game. We may wonder whether at the summit of the human progress these anachronisms will be corrected by a finer intuition, a closer interaction of social machinery than that which now jolts us round along, but such completeness in not be prophesied or even conceived as possible. Enough that in the present case (the union of Tess with Alec D' Urbervilles, which causes the tragedy of Tess) as in Millions, it was not the two halves of a perfect whole, that confronted each other at the perfect moment, a missing counterpart wandering independently about the earth, waiting in gross obtuseness till the late time came, out of which delay sprang anxieties, disappointments, shocks, catastrophies, and passing strange destinies".

The imagery and the words employed by Hardy in the above passage are sufficient to show his conception of love and marriage. His view is like that of Plato or Shelley, but he does not sentimentalize love and marriage like Sir Water Scott. His view also differs from that of George Meredith, who has intellectualized love and marriage. While idealists like Browning believe that marriage is a sacred rite, and its dissolution would be heresy. Hardy firmly believes that marriage is a social contract, rather than a mere religious sacrament. The contracting parties enter into it for some common specific purpose. True marriage, therefore, consists in the union of hearts and not a mere physical jointure which is celebrated by the priest, the holy Father. Moreover, he holds that if the relations between husband and wife become strained and inconducive to the mutual good they deserve to be broken asunder. Restitution of conjugal rights if either of the parties is unwilling, is immoral and inhuman. Human nature is freedom-loving and marriage vows, if rigidly followed, ruin the freedom of the married couple. The thought of being under the vow to continue to love when it is beyond endurance, is naturally irksome, true love then ends there and only hypocrisy prevails.

Marriage is an ideal worthy of human attainment only when the common interests and aspirations of the couple joined in a holy wedlock are mutually adjustable. Marriage is the highest kind of friendship and the best comradeship. The two souls merge into one and their movements are rhythmically regulated towards the realization of common aims and objectives. It is an act of psychological harmony and spiritual adventure. It is not flame meeting with flame but a spirit calling to spirit. This, in short, is the view of Hardy on marriage. It is a pleasure to read his poem "Her Late Husband" which expresses his standpoint clearly on this subject.

But the remedies that Hardy suggested in his writing to overcome the misery in society due to the maladjustment of marriage were unconventional, and the orthodox people

felt that he was trying to ruin the very foundations of morality. There was much protest, and hue and cry against his views so much so that he gave up novel writing. In fact, he was far advanced of his time in regard to the concept of sex relations and chastity. The conventional physical purity and orthodox chastity were unnatural and repugnant to him. Hence Hardy calls Tess a pure woman. It is the mental purity that he holds in the highest esteem. But Hardy was not an advocate of animal pleasure. He was greatly misunderstood by the people and his novels were called studies in pornography. But how silly is this attitude of critics. Hardy is always healthy in his outlook on the relations of man and woman in society.

The passage of time in the shape of divorce laws has proved that what Hardy advocated was right, and that it is best for a couple to separate when existence with each other becomes unhappy, because marriage does not imply only a physical union, but a union of tastes and ideas.

Hardy's Attitude Towards Modern Civilization

The age in which Hardy lived and wrote his immortal works was an age of great stir and movement in the social and cultural history of England. The Industrial Revolution had entirely changed the life of the English people. Already we find in the eighteenth century the disintegration of the villages and the rise of small townships. This march towards the cities became all the larger and swifter with the birth of machines and factories. Agriculture sank and industry rose, feudal lords took leave and capitalists and industrialists came instead. Increased inventions of science changed the mental atmosphere, and age-long conceptions and conventions came to be bitterly questioned. The Holy Bible, with its God and Christian virtues was interpreted in the light of new thought and enquiry. The cheap and child-like faith was replaced by scepticism and cynicism. Old Victorian prudery broke into pieces and the realistic and rationalistic attitudes of the leaders of thought in almost all branches of life and learning opened new horizons to the people. In fact, the entire old order changed, yielding place to the new. Hardy saw this change and the consequences of the impact of new civilization on the life and thought of the people, very accurately and minutely. His experiences during his London life were abundantly varied and thrilling, and he found that this onrush of modern mechanized and commercial civilization was sure to disintegrate the cementing forces which kept up social poise and equilibrium. Hardy understood and observed the unhealthy conditions of modern civilization :

> *"This strange disease of modern life*
> *With its sick hurry, its divided aims,*
> *Its head overtaxed, its palsied heart."*
>
> (Matthew Arnold)

In a number of his stories and novels Hardy has painted scenes and characters which are made to represent what he supposes to be the influence of modern civilization. In his novels tragedy generally arises from the impact of modern competitive civilization on the primitive and simple life of the old world. Hardy seems to hold that modern society with a civilization quite unnatural and sophisticated has sanctioned traditions and conventions that are no longer of any good to man. The laws governing our social and domestic relations are outdated and burdensome. The complexity brought about in society by modern civilization has made life a problem of problems. Today man has no freedom of will before the mighty Social Code. There is no room in life for change and flexibility. Really the rigid and mechanical fabric of this modern civilization has devastated the elemental cravings of man-kind. Hardy who was a keen and sensitive observer of life and things, looked at the defects of modern social structure with great insight and penetration, and commented on them in several of his novels one after another.

From the biography of Hardy we learn that having been sorely disgusted with the so-called civilized society of London, he returned to his native country and having made a house there for himself, devoted himself forever to the study of country life. He had already fallen in love with rural life and now as he was all the more well-equipped for the task he took upon himself the writing of pastoral romances. The series of novels that came out of his pen admirably depicted the tug-of-war that was going on between the ancient and modern civilization. Modern civilization had brought in its train ambition, lust for power and cheap entertainments. It has destroyed the simple faith of the rural folk. Naturally, therefore, we

find in almost all the novels of Hardy a bitter criticism of the trends of modern civilization. In 'Tess' we find that the ambition of the mother of Tess sends the poor innocent girl to the town where she is raped by the passionate Alec, and made a victim of all the subsequent sufferings and sorrows that come in her life. In 'Jude' we come across a simple boy of elevan, who is fired with a strong desire of attaining high academic distinctions. He comes to the city, but soon before he is able to fulfil his ambition, he becomes a poor victim of passionate fashionable life that is led in the cities. His dormant sexual appetite wake up, and find food at the hands of a passionate woman Arabella who ruins all his intellectual hopes and aspirations. After sometime Sue, the intellectual lady, comes in his life and brings him some satisfaction and spiritual solace. But the devil of social conventions does not permit them to live together, for they are already married, Jude to Arabella, and Sue to Mr. Phillotson. Coming to 'Far From the Madding Crowd' we find a brilliant example of how modern civilization spoils the lives of many a simple and innocent people. Before Sergeant Troy comes in the life of Bathsheba, she has written a valentine to Boldwood and there is every possibility of her marriage with the young landlord. But no sooner does Troy comes than the tables are turned and she falls a poor victim to the alluring charms of this young soldier when he displays his skill in the sword exercise. Innocent faith is defeated by the external show and artificiality and the result is not far to follow. Bathsheba, in a fit of jealousy, marries this soldier Far from the madding Crowd, in Weatherbury. Besides, there is one more very fatal attack of modern civilization on the simple faith of this place. Troy entraps poor Fanny Robin and the girl is pregnant. She reaches the church where she is called by Troy but is afterwards refused by him. As a man of faith and word, Troy should have accepted her even after her pregnancy, for there was no difficulty in her way, but as he had now seen Bathsheba and is enamoured of the new rich landlady, he refuses to accept her as his wife. The poor maid-servant creeps upto the Labour

Union's gate with the help of a dog and ultimately dies there of childbirth. The ruin brought about by the modern civilized world does not end here. Troy, a true and perfect symbol of the so-called modern civilization, cannot love even Bathsheba faithfully. All her money is spent in speculation and racing, the two great gifts of modern civilization. He deserts her and returns at a dramatic moment when the 'widow' Bathsheba is in the house of Boldwood at the Christmas party. There he is shot dead by the passionate lover———Boldwood. The result is the tragedy of intense import. Boldwood is imprisoned for life while Troy has already gone the way of all flesh.

In 'The Return of the Native' too we come across the same effect of modern civilization. The return of the native, Mr. Yeobright, creates a flutter in the life of inhabitants of Egdon Heath. Eustacia Vye falls a sorry victim to this young man, who has come back from Paris completely disgusted with the life there. But as she is already in love with Wildeve, the engineer, she is on the horns of dilemma after her marriage with Yoebright, for she finds that her desires to enjoy the pleasures of modern civilization and all the blessings that are its product. And the moment her lover comes with money, she contemplates an escape with him. Already she had quarrelled with her husband before and death of Mrs. Yeobright, her mother-in-law. One evening, therefore, she runs away and falls into the river and dies. Wildeve is also drowned in saving her. Thus tragedy is completed by the attraction which the artificial glamour of modern civilization offers to otherwise simple-minded characters.

In 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' the same naked dance of modern civilization is presented by Hardy. Henchard, a poor but healthy and energetic hay-trusser, by dint of sheer energy and perseverance becomes the mayor of Casterbridge. But the moment Farfrae, who represents all the qualities of modern civilization, comes into his service, he is doomed. The introduction of up-to-date methods of farming and business together with the latest machies introduced by Farfrae do increase the wealth of Henchard, but

when the young Scotchman establishes independently in the same town and enters into a keen commercial competition with Henchard, the latter's downfall is sealed.

It is only the rustics in the novels of Hardy who are not influenced by modern civilization, and hence, they are happier and more contented than their fellow-citizens living in great fashionable cities. There is no disturbance in the life of the members of what Hardy call the 'philosophic party'. They are the true sons and daughters of the soil, steeped in customs and traditions handed down to them from the time immemorial. Their hopes and ambitions never stretch beyond the horizon of their locality. They lead a satisfied life, making calm resignation to destiny which is the key note of their existence. And when some foreign element enters the peaceful atmosphere of Wessex life, the impact of it is sure to lead———as it does in several of Hardy's novels———to disaster and tragedy. In fact, it may be said that in Hardy's novels tragedy invariably takes it rise from the impact of modern civilization on the simple and unsophisticated life of the Wessex people. According to Hardy the people living in the so-called civilized states of society are far from truth, beauty and goodness. There is no feeling left in them, no emotions stirring, no milk of human kindness flowing. They are highly complex and competitive. They have no time to stand and stare and contemplate on the higher aspects of life. They struggle hard for their own existence without caring for the feelings of their fellow-beings. They are selfish, passionate, rude and violent. Hence there is no real happiness and piece of mind in their life. If peace and happiness at all exists, it is "far from the madding crowd" of sinful cities as the title of one of the novels of Hardy suggests.

Hardy's Attitude Towards Heredity And Environment

It was only in the first quarter of the twentieth century that novels depicting the complete life-history of their principal characters, tracing their psychological development from the cradle to the grave, began to be written. Among the chief novels of this quality mention may be made of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's "Carnival", Mr. Hugh Walpole's "Fortitude" "Mr. J.D. Beresford's" "Jacob Stahl" and the best of all, Mr. Arnold Bennett's "The Old Wives Tale". But before 1900, majority of English novels introduced their chief characters, both men and women, in the prime of their life, at a time when their youthful passions were mature enough for the purposes with which the main theme of these novels was mostly concerned. No doubt, 'David Copperfield' and 'Tristran Shandy' gave a complete life-history of their heroes, but they are exceptions and they only prove the general rule. Like his contemporary novelists, Hardy nowhere presents a full life-history of his principal characters ; only in 'Jude the Obscure' he introduces a boy of eleven who becomes afterward the hero of the novel. Yet in his novels there are frequent references made to the early formative years of life, when the mind stores up rich hoards of impressions and experiences from outward surroundings and circumstances. The character and attitudes of parents, the size of the family and general home conditions make an inevitable reaction on the child. Though Jude is the only personage of note in the Wessex novels who is actually introduced in early childhood, the youthful years are not dealt with at length, and it is mostly in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" that Hardy shows himself most concerned with these factors of heredity and environment.

Lionel Johnson seems to make much of Hardy's belief in heredity, in his famous book "The Art of Thomas Hardy". He thinks that he troubles of Tess began long before she was born, in the lawless lives of her aristocratic ancestors, whose blood still run to warmly in her veins. Angel Clare gives utterance to stinging words about 'decrepit families'. But Grimsditch remarks : "Whatever may be the thought of Hardy on the subject of the hereditary, there can be no shadow of doubt that Tess's youth is passed under highly unfavourable conditions." He explains all the sorrows and sufferings of Tess with reference to her environment. However, the fact is that Tess's character is as much shaped and moulded by heredity as by environment. She is born of poor reckless parents and has no intellectual or moral training to lead her on the right path. Mrs. John Durbeyfield, her mother, while she possesses some virtues as a house wife, displays weakness not only in respect of her resolution and intelligences but also in her moral principles. She is wholly governed by worldly interests. When Tess returns home from Trantridge, it is not the loss of her child's innocence and happiness that she deplores so much as Tess's unwillingness and inability to raise the future of her family by marriage with D' Urbervilles. Again she reproaches Tess for her foolishness in confessing her past spoiled life to Angel Clare. What is the use of her marrying a gentleman and then throwing him away for the sake of her foolish morality. She thinks that Tess is a girl who has been adroit in her love-affairs instead of planning to turn them to her own as well as to her family's advantage. Thus Mrs. Joan Durbeyfield has a mean, calculating strain in her character and it is this which is partly responsible for the ruin of her child's life. Then Joan Durbeyfield, the father of Tess, is shown as thrifty, hardworking person but he cannot provide adequate support to his family. Tess possesses an unselfish and unspoiled mind full of pure motives and intentions, but heavy responsibilities descend too early upon her young shoulders and mar the proper worth of her character.

It is the poor strained circumstances of her family which lead her astray from the path of virtue and righteousness. She gives two-third of the money left to her by Angel Clare to thatch the Durbeyfield cottage, a piece of generosity which makes it necessary for her to do hard and bitter toil at Flintcomb Ash. Again after a few years of it, she returns to the man who had formerly played with her chastity. Thus the conditions of Tess's home-life are the beginning of her sorrow and the first and last factor in bringing about her tragic end. Her character is a product of both heredity and environment.

Let us now take the case of Jude. He comes upon the scene at the age of eleven. It is clear that he is not an ordinary boy, but a child full of ambition, possessing a deep solicitude for the animal world, and an unusual insight. He lives under the care of his great-aunt, a baker, and from the first Hardy shows the conflict between the sensitive mind of Jude and the hard narrow conditions under which his life is spent. He is 'crazy for books', and consumed with desires and aspirations which those about him cannot understand. The poor economic condition of his family coupled with unfavourable social surroundings lead his feet into rough and rugged pathways. In common with Tess, he has both hereditary tendencies and the forces of his environment to combat in addition to his other struggles. It is clear that had Jude lived in other times and other circumstances, his career would have been entirely different.

It is interesting to note how Hardy throws a backward glance almost invariably at the days of youth from the point where he takes up the life-story of his most famous and closely studied personages. Angel Clare is contrasted with his two conventional brothers ; and yet, when Tess's confession comes, it becomes evident how very deeply the views of that Evangelical rectory in which he has been brought up, have rooted themselves in his being, covered as they are with neo-pagan encrustations. Eustacia, too, never forgets Budmouth, with its bands, smart officers,

and gay parade of fashion. Grace Melbury and Clym Yeobright both feel the pull of their old environment, in spite of all the changes of scene and interest they have undergone. How significant it is that Jocelyn Pierston, in his search for Well-Beloved, comes back at last to that strange island where he was born and where his imagination was fed with curious and fanciful things.

In all his major novels, Hardy has shown clear traces of the power and influence which heredity and environment, particularly the latter, exercise on the formation of human character. For Hardy character is but one of the circumstances in a man's environment, though an important one. The man is born with certain dispositions, tendencies, and constitution, derived from his parents. But this is not all ; he is born in a certain state of society, in a particular set of circumstances. The given tendencies and dispositions react upon the environment, and the latter acts upon the former, modifying them or intensifying them. From the continual action and reaction of these two factors the man's dispositions and tendencies become firmly fixed, and these may now be called his character. His life, *i.e.*, all that he does and suffers, is the result of the interaction of these two factors, character and environment. Explaining Hardy's outlook in this respect, Grimsditch rightly remarks : "Man is the creature of circumstances, a pawn in the game played by destiny. Destiny subjects him to a number of external influences, the sum-total of which makes up his environment, and this plays a large part in the development of his characters."

Hardy's Attitude Towards Society

Literature is said to be the mirror of society. It depicts the social conditions and often vigorously the various problems that are of greatest significance to the people composing that society. These problems arise out of the contact of one member with other members. In their daily intercourse, people generally discuss these problems for they play a very definite and significant role in their lives. Literature, therefore, cannot but happily become the mouthpiece of these problems of society. Realism in literature is possible only when the current problems are touched by the men of letters. There are persons who pay little or no attention to this sort of literature saying that the problems dealt with in a particular novel, poem, or drama are of a transitory character and naturally, with the passage of time, they fade away and disappear. They are of the opinion that only the fundamental problems of human life and human personality should be taken up by literary artists. But unfortunately they ignore a very important fact, that no problems can be solved without a direct or indirect reference to social structure. Society is highly complex and gives birth to many intricate problems. Hence, every artist is obliged to make his art a vehicle for the expression of these problems, by showing their gigantic impact, their seriousness and significance.

Hardy wrote his long series of Wessex Novels in an age which was full of various problems. It was, in fact, an era of problems. The scientific discoveries made in those days created a powerful and stirring effect on the thoughts of the generation. The Bible came to be interpreted in the light of new scientific investigations. Darwin's 'The Origin of

Species' and 'The Descent of Man' revolutionized the moral and spiritual thought of the day. Then the new social and political currents, fostered by great thinkers, also contributed largely towards this mighty change of thought. Democracy had established itself; the man in the street was no more a mere 'no man'; he had realized, as never before, his importance in the scheme of things. Hardy, a native of Wessex, could not remain aloof from these influences. His keen and sensitive mind grasped the different problems of his contemporary society and gave them a serious thought and study. He knew the effect of the vastly increasing social problems on the generation of the day, particularly on the country folk. It is no exaggeration to say that if one whishes to know the society of the times of Hardy, he should go to his novels which are the best motion pictures that have in them the faithful records of the various social problems of the day.

The Wessex novels present a simple, primitive, unsophisticated society, which has not been spoilt by the impact of modern civilization. Whenever a clash between these two takes place, the result is invariably tragic for the simple rural life is painfully disturbed. There are some novels which end happily, but they also have these social problems depicted in their most vivid form 'Tess' and 'Jude' are regarded by the majority of critics as the two outstanding social novels of Hardy, in which the author has openly torn into pieces the social taboos and conventions. In fact, Hardy came to think in the end that it was neither the malevolence of God nor the stupidity of the individual man, but the cruelty of society which is responsible for most of the evils and suffering in the world. The older he grew, the more bitter became his quarrel with society and its organised injustices against the individual. In 1928, he wrote a Christmas epigram which summarizes all the bitterness that he felt towards the incurable savagery of the human herd:

"Peace upon earth" ! was said. We sing it,
And pay a million priests to bring it,
After two thousand years of mass,
We' ve got as far as poison gas."

The punishment of society for individual error, was far beyond the bounds of human decency and fairness. This thesis, the cardinal principle of Hardy's maturer philosophy, finds its best expression in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles". Tess is the victim of an inflexible moral law and an inexorable social code. Her parents prevail upon her to get a job as poultry girl on the farm of the vulgar old lady D'Urbervilles, with the dream of a brilliant match for her. She meets here a handsome but unprincipled young scoundrel, Alec. The result is a brief romance, disillusionment and a child. The child soon dies. It is sometime before she finds the courage to face the world again. She accepts the job as a dairy maid on the Talbothy Farm. Here she makes acquaintance with Angel Clare. The two are drawn closely together. When Angel declares his love, Tess does not have the courage to reveal her past life. Her dream is too beautiful to be shattered by that ugly monster, the Social Code. As they depart from the church, they hear the crowing of a cock——a symbol for the disapproval of society. An ill-timed noise it is. Angel confesses his sin of two days' dissipation with a scarlet woman. Tess excuses him and then relates her own transgression. But Angel is not ready to forgive her. This is the double standard of morality. A woman must never sin. She is deserted. After long sustained miseries Tess gives her body to Alec, but her heart is still wandering in search of Clare who is also deeply longing for his bride. He founds her in a fashionable boarding house——a degraded woman. The relentlessness of Fate———as

examplified by the Social Code———has so long led the threads of their lives that they can no longer reach out towards each other. Clare starts for his home. In the meantime Tess kills Alec and overtakes Angel immediately. Now, hand in hand they depart from the scene of their suffering, but only for a moment of tragic irony. She is arrested, tried and found guilty and is hanged. This is how she is made to pay her debt to the Social Code.

In 'Tess' Hardy has attached the conventional conception of chastity and purity and shown that the loss of physical chastity is not the loss of purity and character. He has, therefore, called Tess 'a pure woman' or woman of character. His next novel 'Jude the Obscure' is again an attack on the conventional morality of society. Jude and Sue live together and are blessed with children. But society does not approve of their association. According to its standard people who are married with different persons should not live with each other and produce children, for unluckily Jude was married with an animal woman Arabella, and Sue with an incompanionable man Phillotson. They are, hence, by passing the social law. They are, over and above, begetting illicit progeny. Their children soon die. Sue returns to Phillotson whom she hates, and Arabella to Jude. But this does not last long. Jude soon dies of dissipation and hunger for he is not able to find any employment. This, then, is the end of the story which shows clearly the rigidity of the institution of marriage. Society grants marriage only for the preservation of the race ; it does not care for its emotional and spiritual purposes. The soul is killed, only the animal is nourished. And Hardy, as a cultured and decent man, could not but find fault with the system which supported this state of affairs, in the marriage relations.

Again 'The Mayer of Casterbridge' is a novel which gives us several example of the sinister attitudes of society. The impact of modern civilization on the simple life of the Casterbridge town forms one of the main trends of the

story. The characters are the pitiable victims of social unrest. Their lives are made happy or miserable by the position they occupy in society. Their society is conventional and orthodox and any change is bound to frustrate the innovator in Casterbridge. In the life of Henchard, we find that the most important part is that which is played by society. Henchard is a battle-ground of antagonistic forces. He proposes but society disposes. At every moment, the demon of society is seen threatening his hopes and aspirations.

Hardy's Conception of Tragedy and Comparison with Shakespeare

Before Shakespeare, Marlowe had revolutionized the conception of tragedy. It was he, who gave to English drama the romantic tragedy and blank verse. Shakespeare literally developed and followed his methods. Now what is the conception of tragedy that Shakespeare had? Although like Marlowe, Shakespeare never had any university education to help him in evaluating literary standards and innovating new dramatic techniques, yet the critics have formulated some theories in regard to Shakespearian tragedy. Bradley has found that in Shakespearian tragedy "Character is Fate" meaning thereby that tragedy springs as a natural consequence of some fatal flaw in the character of the hero, who is otherwise blessed with unique qualities of head and heart and who belongs to a very high status in society either as king or prince, or as general or nobleman. Shakespeare thus shows, holds Bradley, that there is conflict in the mind of his hero. Besides this flaw in the character of the hero, there are some other factors also that are responsible for the tragedy. They are the elements of chance, abnormal states of mind and the interference of supernatural beings. But the critics have not paid much attention to these factors and have sought the explanation of the tragedy largely in the character of the hero. The ultimate impression left after reading or seeing any of the tragedies of Shakespeare in one of 'tragic waste'. We feel that something highly valuable and serviceable has been wasted. We are, nevertheless, elevated to a plane of higher altitude because of the excess of imaginative and aesthetic satisfaction derived

therefrom. This, in short, is the conception of Shakespeareian tragedy. Now we turn to Hardy.

The first obvious point of difference to be noted between Hardy and Shakespeare is in their conception of the tragic hero. Shakespeare's hero is a man of high social status. But this is not the case with the tragedies of Hardy. Here we find the ordinary man to have captured the position of the Shakespearian hero. Hardy has given the central part in his tragic novels always to persons of poor and low classes. These persons are not highly lettered and cultured in the Elizabethan sense. They are not gentlemen or noble dames of the Elizabethan court. Instead there are farmers, hay-trussers, dairy-workers, masons and furze-cutters. In "Far from the Madding Crowd" we have Gabriel Oak, a farmer and shepherd as the hero; in "The Mayor of Casterbridge" we have Henchard, the hay-trusser; in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles", Tess, a girl of poor family and a worker on farms especially in dairies; in "Jude the Obscure" we find that the hero is an ordinary boy, who at the age of eleven aspires for high academic attainments, but is all through the novel a mason; and in "The Return of the Native" the hero is Mr. Yeobright, a man who returns disgusted with the busy and sophisticated life of Paris and becomes a furze-cutter after his marriage with Eustacia Vye. Notwithstanding their low position in the society, these heroes and heroines of Hardy have qualities, which have given them the place they occupy in the novels. The low position of Hardy's chief characters in no way deprives them of their grandeur and sublimity which belongs to them as figures of an intensely tragic world. The perspective in which they are looked by their creator makes them as grand and imposing as any of the great tragic figures of Greek or Elizabethan drama. They are painted not as individuals but as symbols of mankind fighting against the forces of destiny. We know them not in their individual relations to each other, but in their relations to time, death and fate. We do not see them in quick agitation against the lights and crowds of cities, we see them against the earth, the storm, and the seasons.

We know their attitude towards some of the most tremendous problems. We see them not in detail but enlarged and dignified. They linger in our imagination, to use the words of David Cecil, "as grand typical figures outlined against the huge horizon of the universe." The most outstanding quality of Hardy's great tragic heroes on account of which they win our admiration and find a permanent dwelling in our memory is the quality of tremendous courage and endurance which they display during their struggle with opposite forces. The lesson we learn from Hardy and the study of his tragic heroes and heroines is always that of calm endurance.

The cause of tragedy in Shakespeare is one fatal flaw in the character of the hero. Now what are the causes of tragedy in Hardy? Critics are not unanimous of this point. Generally there are two views held in this respect. One view is that tragedy in Hardy is brought about the criss-cross of circumstances and that hero's efforts are doomed to failure by some jealous power. The 'Immanent Will' is the cause of tragedy. Man is mere puppet in the hands of circumstances. Things are so arranged by Fate that tragedy is inevitable. There is no God in heaven and everything is wrong with the world. Man proposes but the power beyond human control disposes———this is what happens in the tragedies of Hardy. The interference of Fate in human drama assumes various forms. Sometimes, we find it in the form of weather failures and untimely storms as it is in the case of Henchard's commercial ruin; sometimes it is the social conventions that ruin the happiness of otherwise good and pure persons, as it is in the case of Tess and Jude. 'Providence is nothing but coquettish' remarks Hardy in 'The Return of the Native.'

The other view is that tragedy in Hardy is brought about by the character of the hero concerned. It is the character of the hero himself which is responsible for the sufferings and the final catastrophe of his life. The critics belonging to this camp do not believe in the determinism of Hardy, although they believe in reasonable explanation

offered by the sequence of cause and effect. It is the first cause that sets the sequence rolling. The failings of character at every step intensify and precipitate the tragedy. Whenever a crisis is presented, choice is given to the hero but every time wrong choice is made by him and the result is the tragedy of a vast magnitude. There is often a very minute psychological analysis, given by Hardy, of the inner conflict of this leading figure. The critics who cherish the view that there is lesser conflict in Hardy than in Shakespeare appear unjustified when we go through the pages of 'Tess' and 'Jude' and 'The Mayor of Casterbridge.' There is more subtle study of the heart and mind in Hardy than in Shakespeare.

As a matter of fact, tragedy in Hardy is brought about by the character of the hero as much as by the impact of external forces. Life is a mystery and no true artist can afford a complete explanation thereof. Nor is it his task indeed. And Hardy who is an artist first and a philosopher next has given no explanation. His casual impressions and their occasional expressions should not be questioned too much. He was too great an artist to be confined to one set of rules. He was fully alive to the tragedy of life. As he saw it, so he painted it without any idea of theorizing or moralizing.

However, tragedy in Hardy is not despairing; it is elevating and stimulating. It does not shake our faith in life; all the more it strengthens it; it does not make us light-hearted, but makes us wiser and better; it does not throw us down, it elevates and ennobles us and we are the better to have gone through the highly-pitched emotional and intellectual atmosphere of the tragedy. The aesthetic experience and pleasure make one a different being. The impression of tragic waste is there, we rise and fall with the hero. And this is what a genuine Shakespearian tragedy also does.

Shakespeare towards the close of his great tragedies gives us sentences and statements which are pregnant

comments on the vanity and futility of this life. Towards the end of his life, Macbeth speaks of life as "a tale told by on idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." This remark of Macbeth stirs our soul to the depths and creates in us a mood which every great work of tragic art is expected to evoke. It evokes in us twin feelings of terror and pity, which Aristotle long ago, explained as the fundamental requisites of a standard and successful tragedy. Like Shakespeare, Hardy also winds up his tragedies with chaste and sombre comments and reflections. He closes his "Tess of D' Urbervilles" with the remark. "The President of Immortals had ended his sport with Tess." 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' is wound up with the remark that "happiness is but the occasional episode in the general drama of pain."

Again like Shakespeare, Hardy has given a due place to the comic element in his tragic world. Often it has been said and righty too that the comic characters of Hardv resembles the Shakespearian comedies. Let us note that Hardy's comic humour is genial, light-hearted and native. It is born of the countryside atmosphere and environment. It is only the rustics of Hardy that provides us with his natural and national disposition which is a marked characteristic of English temperament and English literature. Then like the Shakespearian comic interludes, these rustic characters in the novels of Hardy throw into great relief the tragic intensity of the plot.

One thing more is to be noted. Shakespeare in his tragedies has invariably used blank verse. His tragedies are highly poetic and some portions of them can be enjoyed as separate and individual pieces of poetry. On the other hand, Hardy's tragedies are in prose and they are novels. But this in no way lets his tragedies suffer from prosaicness. His tragic novels are intensely poetic. Really the conception as well as the execution of their themes is bubbling with passion and imagination. There are always highly sensitive and dramatic scenes. Truely have some critics been led to find in Hardy a greater poet than a novelist.

The beginning, the middle and the end of his novels are works of imagination, passion and poets. Like Shakespeare who is highly poetic towards the close of scene, Hardy also rises to heights seldom attained, towards the close of his chapters.

Thus we conclude that though the two tragic artist lived and wrote in two entirely different atmospheres and eras, and worked in different fields of literary composition, yet their achievements in their own ways are equally great and immortal. Hardy has done in fiction what Shakespeare did in the field of drama.

Appreciation of Hardy As a Novelist

Hardy's novels and poems are the work of a man painfully dissatisfied with the age in which he lived. He was homesick for the past, the past of England before the strong roots of English manhood and womanhood had been overlain by what seemed to Hardy a thin soil of artificial niceness miscalled education and culture. He distrusted modern civilization because he suspected that its effects was frequently to decivilize and weaken those to whom Nature and old custom had given stout heart, clear heads and enduring spirit. Ancient and modern are constantly at war with each other in his books, where none is happy who has felt the unhealthy touch of artificial refinement. Though Hardy's mind was shaped to some extent by the theories of later German philosophers who regarded the present as a great advance on the past, he thought gratefully of the simple medieval culture lingering on in his native country of Dorset which became the Wessex of his novels. For Hardy this Wessex was still the old England. Its woods, its heaths, its barrows, its barns and byres——all these stood in memory of a noble antiquity making mute protest against invading aggressive modernity. Hardy painted the pictures of the Wessex landscape with almost an epic delight and breathed life into inanimate objects of Nature. He was as thoroughly acquainted with the life and manners of Wessex as Walter Scott with Scotland, or Wordsworth with Cumberland. In fact, Hardy is a regional novelist and the locality of Wessex forms more than a background in the large number of novels that he wrote, for its spirit seems to brood over them and

profoundly influences most of the characters. "His Wessex," says Priestly, "is the special environment of his characters, whose development could not be understood without reference to it". Hardy's natural landscapes steeped in the atmosphere of Wessex are as grand in their immensity and as intensely moving in their appeal as his epic heroes and heroines. Whether it is the grim vastness of Egdon Heath in "The Return of the Native" or the delightful ripeness of Blackmoor Vale in "Tess" or the tree-covered solitude of "The Woodlanders", Hardy's places are as memorable as his people. On Egdon, indeed, the men and women are pigmies———the Heath is itself the demon, moulding and conditioning the lives of those who dwell upon it and who are part of its own life. However, it is this element which saves Hardy from falling into narrow provincialism and raises his work to the level of universal appeal.

From the stand-point of plot-construction, we find that Hardy's novels are unexampled masterpieces. All the incidents and events are skilfully co-ordinated together and there are no loose patches to hang about. The structure of his every great novel is built brick by brick and stone by stone, and the whole design appears perfectly clear in its outline and within its own framework complete. It is said that his early experience as an architect is responsible for the architectural conception and faultless construction of his novels. In this respect, Hardy is in strong contract with his great contemporary, Meredith, whose novels are absurdly loose in constructions, although the latter had advised the former to give more attention to plot, an advice which the former followed almost literally. Another noteworthy feature of the novels of of Hardy is the development we can trace in them of the novelist's manner———his gradual passing from the dramatic to the epic method. 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' seems to mark the transition, which is half-epic and half-dramtic in its method. The earlier masterpieces like 'Far from the Madding Crowd'. 'The Woodlanders' and 'The Return of the Native' are tragic novels

of great passion with a group of people in rural surroundings. But the later novels like 'Tess' or 'Jude' relate the life-history of one person only, and hence they are epic novels.

Hardy possessed unique powers of characterization. Many of his characters, both major and minor, are created with the fulness, vigour and assurance of a Shakespeare or a Dickens. His plots may be conventional, for they are all love-stories with two men loving the same woman or *vice-versa*, but his characters are altogether new and modern for the purposes of fiction. While nearly all the ancient writers have dealt with high life, with such illustrious characters as those of kings, queens, princes and warriors, Hardy has chosen for his novels characters belonging to the low strata of life, like peasants, hay-trussers, farmers and milkmaids. And yet it was the inimitable skill and genious of Hardy that infused epic grandeur in simple and commonplace characters, and raised them to the height of elemental forces. Rightly does Compton-Rickett remark, "His characters are elemental forces on a background of vaster elemental forces: they are the natural expression of sleepy woodland places, austere hills, purling streams, lonely open spaces". The group of rustic folk which figures in many of the Wessex novels is thoroughly Hardian. Most of the humour in the novels centres round these rustics, and the quality of this humour has sometimes been justifiably described as Shakespearian. One thing more to be noted with regard to Hardy's characters is that his female figures are more important than his male characters. Compton-Rickett observes, "Admirable as many of his male characters are, they yield both in clarity and intensity of interest to his women; and since woman is more elemental than man, swayed for more by the instinctive life, their superiority is another illustration of Hardy's peculiar skill in dealing with the primal type." Really Tess, Sue, Bathsheba, Eustacia, Ethelberta and Marty are a galaxy of wonderful feminine characters, all distinct from another. There is not the

same variety and force among Hardy's men whom Lionel Johnson divides into two classes : first, country-heroes and lovers, solid, massive men like Gabriel Oak or Giles Winterbourne who face the world squarely ; and second, youths, like Clym Yeobright too delicate to be impulsive, too gentle to be vicious, yet having a certain hardness about them which helps them in fighting against their relentless Destiny.

Generally Hardy is regarded as a pessimist who has painted in his novels a very dark and grim picture of human life. His is a world abounding in thwarted desires, unsatisfied longings, undeserved sufferings, clash of duties, disappointments and disillusionments high and noble aspirations ending in miserable failure. He believes in a Supreme Power which is indifferent to human affairs ; in 'The Dynasts' Hardy call it the Immanent Will. Sometimes he seems to imply that this power is not mere indifferent, but that it actually takes delight in human misery, that "as flies to wanton boys are we to the Gods ; they kill us for their sport." This is the attitude expressed in the closing sentence of 'Tess of the D' Urbervilles' : "Justice was done and the President of Immortals ended his sport with Tess." But with the passage of time Hardy came to speak of the Immanent Will as something which is neither good nor evil, but somethings which is altogether indifferent, blind and purposeless. In 'The Dynasts' where his ideas reached final expression, he held that there is no active intelligence, no just and loving God behind human Destiny but that Creation is swayed by an unconscious mechanical force, sightless, dumb, mindless, and equally indifferent to the sufferings and joys of mankind.

Sometimes in Hardy tragedy is carried beyond the limits of both art and nature. Often there is a bitterness of feeling which is beyond the limits of human toleration. It is not that what he urges is not true, but there is another aspect of picture, a happy and bright one, which is equally true, and upon which Hardy is silent. In his earlier writings there are some rays of hope, or what he himself

calls 'occasional interludes of happiness,' and sweetness and bitterness of life are admirably contrasted ; but in the later novels——Tess and Jude especially—— the gloom is needlessly intensified. These are expression in prose, of Matthew Arnold's deeply melancholy lines :

> *"We are here on a darkling plain*
> *Swept by confused alarms of struggle and flight*
> *Where ignorant armies clash by night."*

But this extremely tragic view of life as revealed in the novels of Hardy should not lead us to believe that he is a cynic or immoral philosopher. On the other hand, Hardy is a soul full of the milk of human kindness His sense of pity is perhaps more acute than that of any other modern writer. Realizing as he does the terrible handicaps of life, he treats with gentle tolerance the passionate misdoings of men and women ; and is better disposed to the sinner than to the saint.

However, it is clear that Hardy did not see eye to eye with the views prevalent in his times. To him the omnipotent God was not acceptible and the church was too impotent to redress the ills of the spirit. On the contrary, it was a hot bed of corruption. He found that conventional associations and institutions crushed human values. Hence he always revolted against all of them. Even in Nature he could not find the healing power. His view of life is, therefore, not very bright. But on the other hand we should not call him a pessimist without some qualification. Hardy's philosophy is the some as that of Schophenheur. It calls for the renunciation of will to live. Often while fighting against the circumstances, his characters are crushed, although the fight they put up is certainly admirable. And Hardy is on the side of his fighting friends. Hence his sympathy and kindness. It is seldom that his characters fall because of themselves. In the majority of his novels hostile forces are shown as taking vicious pleasure in ruining the lives of innocent and simple people. Tess is an innocent sufferer at the

hands of social conventions and Jude suffers because of the marriage institution being considered essential for man and woman to live as husband and wife. The result is that human beings suffer like flies and maggots. And the irony is that God thought of as the dispenser of justice and shower of mercy sits silently on the unseen and invisible heights. He does not care for the grief of His struggling and suffering creatures.

Hardy is sombre probably because he was sensitive and tender-hearted. Moreover his own life was a big factor in moulding his attitude towards life. Hardy finds no solution in any of the accepted ways. He was a thinker, honest and sincere, remaining always a student of the inexhaustible book of life. With years his philosophy of life became grey but it was never dogmatic and despairing. He had faith in the divinity of life and no honest reader can lose faith in life by reading him.

As regards the style of Hardy, it may be said that it corresponds with and "expresses the profoundest intention of the writer". Duffin calls it "essentially of the philosophic type, an emanation of his mind". For ordinary narrative purposes Hardy has a style that is bleak, bare and bald, although as Arnold said of Wordsworth 'it is bald as the mountain tops are bald, with a boldness that is full of grandeur'. Hardy's style rarely lacks dignity and strength. He could often vary his style to suit the purpose in hand : in books like "Far From the Madding Crowd" and "The Woodlanders" the pastoral style predominates, the tragic style in "The Mayor and Jude". Hardy was a great master in the use of similes and metaphors. Pedants, however, can find fault with his misrelated participles and split infinitives and his occasional mistake of grammars. It is also possible to regret his partiality for scientific or technical terms which he often used to ensure the accuracy of his descriptions. That Hardy was not a born master of style like Thackeray, nor a made one like Stevenson cannot be denied. But the style is in the case of Hardy a perfect

expression of his temper and personality and his view of life. As Compton-Rickett observes : "It is an admirable style, clear, straightforward, unpretentious, yet capable of carrying subtle implications, and always instinct with a simple dignity, and compelling sincerity".

In short, Hardy saw the eternal drama of human life———the conflict between the aspiration of man and the jealousy of something beyond control. He portrayed it so faithfully and vigorously and aesthetically that quite won for him universal recognition as a supreme artist. He is of brotherhood of the greatest novelist of all ages and places. He began by writing verse and closed by writing epic poetry. There are quite naturally critics who hold that Hardy was greater as poet than as a novelist. But the greatest critic———time——— has his own verdict which none can dare deny. To-day Hardy is regarded by universal consent as a greater novelist than poet.

Select Opinions on Hardy

"Hardy is above all a painter of women. Nothing indeed is as rare as a writer capable of depicting with equal success the character of both sexes. Hardy does not handle masculine psychology with the same penetration. His male characters are either sensual, or effiminate or else victims of a kind of internal attrition. He doubtless discovered in woman a complexity which remained more prominently before his eyes, a submission to instinct, which involved her in more intimate relations with the order of things. His heroines have physical existence no less than a moral, and the links between their beauty and their characters are forged by an artist eminently qualified to form creatures of flesh and blood adjusted to the ends for which he strove".

(*Pierre D' Exidemil*)

"The style of Mr. Hardy is a deliberate and a grave style : his thought fall into phrases and paragraphs of a Latin massiveness. Rarely can it be called supple, agile, brilliant ; the sentences do not flash out with a bright play of wit and fancy in the manner of some delightful modern writers. Rather Mr. Hardy cultivates a sustained equability, like that of Roman writers. He gives us the comfortable sense of dealing with realities. Mr. Hardy's form is proper to his subject ; for there is evidence in plenty that his work is full of conscious pains, of fore-thought and of elaboration. He abounds in fine simplicities. And whilst his happy turns and phrases do not startle us into a surprised delight, disproportionate to their importance, they fill us with a continual pleasure."

(***Lionel Johnson***)

"No English novelist of our age has been more affected by science than Hardy. The immutability of Nature, the mutability of human life, the bigness of Nature, the littleness of man, the inexorable characters of natural laws, and the punny struggles of human personalities trying to evade them ——— this is what we find in the novels of Hardy. What Buckle did in history, Hardy has done in fiction, taken for his themes unimportance of the individual man.

Now all this conceivable might have proved very unattractive in a story-teller ; whatever criticism may be passed on it from a philosophic point of view if Mr. Hardy shows himself to be nothing more than a scientifiic observer. But he is also, and quite as emphatically, a poetic observer. He has a sensitive, brooding imagination, that loves to play over the past, and sees in the mouldering relics of a bygone age symbols of a pomp and power that still can unconsciously affect the imagination and lives of men ; he is forever noticing those transmitted impulses of pagan feeling and religious sentiment that run through generations, watching with intense pre-occupation the mingling of the finer elemental qualities, sexual devotion, pity, courage, endurance, with the coarser 'ape and tiger' instincts ; showing marked affinity, as an observer of peasant life, with the naturalism of writers like zola, he suffuses his naturalism with a rarer delicacy and beauty."

(*Arthur Compton-Rickett*)

"One of the marks of greatness in a literary artist is the power to unravel the tangle of conflicting motives and deal faithfully with many varieties of human character, weaving out of their multi-coloured strands a pattern full of beauty. When the artist can do this successfully no consideration of a personal nature, no leaning towards a particular class or creed ought to mar the critics judgment or create a prejudice in his mind. It may be true that Thomas Hardy sees more of the dark side of life than of the bright side. But it cannot be said that he distorts character and event to fit in with a preconceived theory ;

his theory is drawn from the facts as he observes them. And however much we feel that in his works man is helpless puppet in the grip of fate, however much our self-conceit may recoil from his conception of the comparative insignificance of humanity in the cosmic scheme, we must be sensible of the light he throws on many beautiful aspects of existence; and the most beautiful of all is the spectacle of mankind undaunted, bearing trouble with fortitude, hating cruelty and injustice, and ever aspiring, albeit ineffectually, towards the heights."

(Herbert B. Grimsditch)

"Hardy's vision of life gains immensely in power from the fact that his talent was of the old calibre. Dwelling though he did in this setting part of time, he was yet gifted with that sheer intensity of creative imagination which seems, alas, to dwindle with every advance of self-consciousness and sophistication. The spectacle of the universe, as conceived by rationalist science, is presented to us for once through the eyes of an intense poetic vision. Hardy's sad, latter-day-wisdom incarnates itself in tales that have the breadth, the soaring fancy, the zestful crowding fecundity of invention, which is generally found only in the morning of literature. He may be the latest of his race, but he is not the least. We may take our farewell gaze at the England of Shakespeare through the eyes of one who, in spite of all his imperfections, is the last English writer to be built on the grand Shakespearian scale."

(David Cecil)

"All qualifications notwithstanding, there is a dignity and beauty about Mr. Hardy's best work, which all lovers of literature may be grateful; to accuse him as some have done, of lax morality in his presentation of life, is ludicrously beside the mark. Errors of taste there are no doubt; he has the blunt out spokenness of the countrymen, and there is about his works something of the coarseness of Nature herself, he is never trivial or debasing. The furtive prurience that mars some fiction, the juggling with

moral values that mars other fiction to-day, is absolutely alien to his stern and austerely noble attitude towards human life. Differences of opinion must naturally be held of Hardy as a critic of life; but as an artist, a painter of certain concrete aspects of that life, he is among the greatest in English literature."

(*Arthur Compton Rickett*)

"From reading most of Hardy's works the natural impulse is to imagine their author as a morose, and cynical being. This is a delusion. His surface personality seems to be reflected only in the pure and gentle vein of humour which animates the humbler country figures in his novels. Hardy always regards himself, as a writer as a kind of aeroline harps, blown upon by all the winds of heavens, wild and gentle, good and bad, cheerful and sorrowful, sentimental and ironical, frivolous and sober. But to all this variety, the harp gave but one response; it was attuned permanently to a single chord, in a harmonious but minor mode. His was a nature that felt all emotions, but reacted in literature to only a few. His spirit does not means that he failed to perceive, understand and feel deeply the untragic amenities of existence."

"People who print very warm words have sometimes very cold manners," says one of Hardy's characters. By reversing the sense of this statement, without destroying its validity it can be made to apply very nicely to Hardy's cold words and warm manners."

(*Ernest A. Baker*)

"It seems somewhat curious that Hardy has occasionally indicated that he does not particularly enjoy being called a pessimist. He thinks that his view of life is the only possible one, but he is slow to admit that he looks at life with darkened lenses. It has been frequently noted that he indicates at times that there may exist loopholes of escape from the prison of despair; that there may after all an ultimate hope for a world in misery and travail. This rather vaguely defined hope or faith in the ultimate

rightness of things takes three general forms: the Nirwana of non-existence; the growth of consciousness in the Will; and a melioristic belief in a gradual improvement in life through the idealistic efforts of enlightened men.

Hardy definitely subscribes to the rather forlorn hope that finds its foundation in a Schopenhaurian renunciation of the will to live. He looks foward with complacency, if not delight, to a future of endless unconsciousness whereby the harmony between human life and the unconsciously governed universe will be re-established. "Better than waking is to sleep," say the Pities in the Dynasts.

"Of the sour and cynical sort of pessimism there is remarkably little to be found in Hardy, despite all that commentators say. He does indeed believe in telling at all times the unadulterated truth, which is according to Oscar Wilde, rarely pure and never simple, even when the effect of such frankness proves disconcerting to the blind optimism of the faithful.

'Shall we conceal the case, or tell it ——
We who believe the evidence?'

He asks. The result is often the unwelcome story told by the trees of Yell's ham Wood: "Life occurs——to deny!" But this sort of pessimism does not completely drain away from man the joy of braving life with an indomitable spirit, as does the more cynical lack of faith in human nature that darkened the last years of Mark Twain."

"Hardy's basic optimism, paradoxical as that expression must sound to his superficial readers and critics, may best be observed in his underlying humanity, in the grand tone of pity that sounds through all his work no less that it does through the philosophy of Schopenhauer, and in the feeling in which he is again in harmony with the great philosopher of the Will, that "man's greatest enemy is man!"

(*Ernest Brennecke*)

"He interested himself a little in philosophy, and more in art; as the years went on he interested himself in fiction as an art, his own in particular, and even wrote suggestively about it. But whether or not he was a great artist, he was not a philosopher. He was a natural and simple man as free from the pretentiousness of 'high art' as from any other pretence, so modest and human as to feel hurt by the clamour of fools around his 'Jude the Obscure.' Hardy was not a child of culture, not even, one sometimes thinks, a well-trained workman in literature. He had never been subjected to any discipline, scarecly, so far as one can see, even in architecture; his education was mainly the outcome of a random, inquisitive, miscellaneous reading, and the love-letters he wrote in youth to the dictation of unschooled peasant girls may well have been an important past of it. His stories lapse at times into extravagance or absurdity. His style, exquisite at movements, is often (though this may be justified by his belief that a living style lies in not having too much style being in fact a little careless) weak, feeble, careless. It is genius that carries him through. And of its possession he mostly seemed unconscious."

"The tragi-comedy of life, its joy and its pain, most often have their poignant edge at the point of sex This is especially so when we are concerned with a highly sensitive, alert rather abnormal child of nature, with the temperament of genius. Hardy was always reticent about autobiographical traits in his novels. He himself said humorously at later times that 'he was a child till sixteen, a youth till he was five and twenty, and a young man till he was fifty.' This indicates an element of abnormality such as we are apt to find in genius. For genius feels the things as we feel, but feels them with a virginal freshness of sensation, a new pungency or a new poignancy, even the simplest things, the rustling of wind in the trees or over the heather, which become, since Hardy has revealed them to us, an experience we had never before known."

(*Havelock Ellis*)

"His essentially romantic insight often enabled him to pierce through the surface of the material things and invest them with a personality that is often more striking and more vividly presented than human agents. If the essential Romantic is, in the words of Lawrence Gilman, 'he who piercing the illusory veil of material facts, reveals to us, through symbol and imagery, the enduring soul of wonder and enchantment which inhabits the world', then Hardy is, at last in his treatment of the external world, as essential Romantic."

(*Ernest Brennecke*)

Introduction To "Jude the Obscure"

Critical Appreciation Of The Novel

Jude the Obscure is a story, in the author's words, "of a deadly war waged, with old Apostolic desperation between flesh and spirit," and tells how the intellectual aspirations of Jude Fawley, a South Wessex villager, are thwarted by a sensuous temperament, lack of character, and the play of circumstances. Early, in life, while he is supporting his passion for learning, by work as a stone-mason, he is entangled in a love-affair with Arabella Donn, a 'mere female animal', and entrapped into marrying her. She presently deserts him and he resumes his studies, and aims at becoming a priest. But he falls in love with his cousin, Sue Bridehead, vivacious, intelligent young school teacher. She marries an elderly school master Mr. Phillotson. Though Jude tries to suppress his passion for Sue, he hovers about her, and presently Sue, driven by physical revulsion leaves Philloston and flies to Jude, and their guilty connexion debars Jude from hope of the priesthood. Though they become free to marry as a result of divorces from their respective spouses, Sue shrinks from this step. Social disapproval makes itself felt, and the couple go down the hill. Their children perish by a tragic fate, and Sue in an agony of remorse and self-abasement returns to Phillotson. Jude takes to drink, is inveigled back by Arabella, and dies miserably. The horrors of his own creation in this, the last of his stories, perhaps turned Hardy away from novel writing to poetry.

Jude the Obscure is another of Mr. Hardy's essays in metaphysics. It is a wild attempt to realize in narrative form some current pessimistic theories, by imagining a world where all women will have an innate aversion against marrying and bearing children; and where, even when children are born, they will resort to suicide out of an instinctive desire not to live. These ideas are embodied in Sue Bridehead and the son of Jude. As a matter of fact, Jude, is a native of that part of the Utopia of the Philosophers over which the author of The Metaphysics of Love dismally reigns. He is Schopenhauer's perfidious lover seeking to perpetuate all his misery and turmoil which otherwise would come to a timely end.' Some very unpleasant details are introduced in order to make the account of this ghastly hallucination resemble a novel of misery, but vainly; the principal characters and the main events are as far removed from the realities of this world as those in 'The Well-beloved.'

This, the last of Hardy's 'novels of character and environment', is also an illustration of his ardent belief in 'Predestination'.

Structure Of The Novel

Prof. Abercrombie has divided the novels of Thomas Hardy into two classes, the dramatic and the epical. In the class of dramatic novels, he places novels like 'Far From the Madding Crowd,' 'The Return of the Native', and 'The Woodlanders' for the reasons that the plots of these novels hinge upon the interplay of various characters that are introduced in them. These novels exploit one of the very common device of drama, *i.e.*, conflict. It is out of the conflict of various characters individually or collectively, that the story evolves and develops. In the novels which are dramatic in their setting, the plot is built out of the actions and reactions of a number of equally important characters who influence each other for good or for evil.

Apart from dramatic novels, those novels of Hardy which contain a single story, of a single person, and where the interest of the story is not divided by minor or sub-plots, are classified by Prof. Abercrombie as Epic novels. 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' and 'Jude the Obscure' have been regarded as Epic novels, for the stories narrated in them are concerned with the rise and fall in the destiny of a single person, a milkmaid on the one hand, a student on the other. The background on which the action of these novels takes place is much more vast and imposing that it is the case of dramatic novels. In a word, whereas the interest of the dramatic novel is based on the subtle psychological analysis of human character as revealed through the conflict between the characters of opposite sort and their reactions to the circumstances in which they are placed, the interest of the epic novels revolves round the unbroken narration of the life and adventures of a single dominant character, who is the hero or the heroine of the story concerned.

This discussion leads us to the conclusion that 'Jude the Obscure' is an epical novel. The novel is a fine depiction of the tragic ups-and-down of Jude Fawley. He is a villager with high intellectual gifts and aspirations, trapped by a disastrous marriage. Deserted by his wife, he studies for priesthood but this ambition is thwarted by his passion for his married Cousin, Sue Bridehead. Gradually the marriage laws of the time and the difficulties in attaining a higher education without means combine to bring him to disaster. This is, in short, the tragical history of Jude, the hero of the novel. We are deeply engrossed in his fortunes and misfortunes. The feeling of suspense is created at many places and we are very anxious to know what happens next. Love being the chief subject of the story, the novel acquires an even greater interest.

Title Of The Novel

The title of the novel is very striking and appropriate. As a critic has pointed out, it has deep links with the theme

of the novel. When we think of title of the novel, we are immediately reminded of the famous lines of Thomas Gray. These lines are :

"Full many a gem, of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Similar is the case with Jude himself. He belongs to a poor and uneducated family. But his dreams are as gigantic as his surroundings are small. He aspires to become a priest. But his intellectual amibitions are frustrated by his weakness for flesh. Events do not rhyme quite as he has thought. He perceives with despondency that, taken all round, he is a man of too many passions to make a good clergyman ; the utmost he can hope for is that in life of constant internal warfare between flesh and spirit the former may not always be victorious. His dreams of becoming a great scholar are shattered to fragments. Despite his desperate efforts to achieve prominence, he remains obscure, and passes away unnoticed and unadmired. Thus we realize that the title embodies the spirit of the novel.

A Brief Summary of the Novel

Jude Fawley, the central figure of the novel, is a man of intellectual aspirations. He has a genuine passion for knowledge. But, at the same time, he is highly sensuous and cannot resist the temptations of flesh. Since he belongs to a poor family, he works as a stone-mason. Nevertheless, he spares time for his studies, and acquires elementary knowledge of Latin and Greek. His aim is to become a scholar. But this lofty ambition remains unfulfilled. Jude falls in love with a village girl, Arabella Donn——'a mere female animal'. He neglects his intellectual pursuits. Later on, he marries her. But the temperamental differences of the couple render the marriage unsuccessful. The marriage, to say the least, is a tragic failure. Arabella goes to Australia with her parents ; there she contracts a second marriage. Jude feels lonely ; he, however, survives the shock, and devotes himself again to his studies.

The profound passion for knowledge takes Jude to Christminster——the city of his hopes and ambitions, where, as he puts it, "the tree of knowledge grows." He writes to the principals of various colleges for admission. Since he is a destitute person, he can't succeed in his scheme. He dream of becoming a great scholar are shattered to fragments. His realizes his limitations and becomes painfully conscious of the fact that he is fit for the work of a stone-mason only. Here, he is again entangled in a love-affair with his cousin, Sue Bridehead. She is a vivacious, intelligent young school-teacher. She treats Jude as a friend, but does not pay any heed to his passionate love. She marries an elderly school-master, Mr. Phillotson. Due to the difference in ages, this marriage also proves to be a failure. Sue Bridehead comes to Jude. She is at

liberty to contract a second marriage, but she eschews this step. She lives with Jude as his unmarried wife, and gives birth to two children.

When the people of the locality come to know that they (Jude and Sue Bridehead) are not legally married, they criticise them for their immoral activities. Their reputation suffers a set back. Jude is dismissed from his work and the family has to face numerous hardships. Sue Bridehead undertakes the business of cake-selling to render financial support to Jude.

During her stay in Australia, Arabella gives birth to a child. He is a precocious child ; and he is known as 'Little Time.' The business of Arabella's parents does not flourish as they expect. So she comes back to England to work as a barmaid. Her parents refuse to tolerate the child any longer, and dispatch him to his mother. Arabella's Australian lover also comes to England and hires a public-house. He wants her to work with him. She regards the child as hinderance in her convenience, and sends him to Jude. The addition of another child to the family places a premium on the difficulties.

The sensitive mind of 'Little Time' is much impressed by the spectacle of miseries and sufferings. One day, in the absence of his parents, he strangulates the children to death, and later on, kills himself in the same manner. The tragedy of Jude now reaches its climax. The death of children brings about a change in the views of Sue Bridehead. Now, she realizes the absurdity of her conduct. She goes back to Mr. Phillotson, and re-marries him. Jude tries to keep in touch with her, but she discourages him on every step. Now, he is left alone to sustain the onslaughts of malevolent and cruel fate. He takes to drink, and ultimately dies in a deplorable condition.

Chapterwise Summary of the Novel

PART FIRST

At Marygreen

I

The schoolmaster, Mr. Phillotson, was leaving the village for Christminster ——the city of scholars and colleges. His scheme, or dream, was to be a university graduate, and then to be ordained. The miller lent him the small cart and horse to carry his goods to the city of his destination. Since he was very intimate with the people of the village, his departure caused dismay among them.

In addition to the packing-case of books, was a cottage piano that he had bought at an auction during the year in which he thought of learning instrumental music. But the enthusiasm having waned he had never acquired any skill in playing; and the purchased article had been a perpetual trouble to him ever since in moving house. The blacksmith, the farm bailiff, and the schoolmaster himself were standing in a perplexed attitude in the parlour before the instrument. They did not know what to do with it. A little boy, who was assisting in the packing, said that his aunt had got a great fuel-house, and it could be put there. They all agreed to the proposal, which seemed to be practicable. The piano was placed in the fuel-house. The boy, who assisted in loading the luggage, was Jude, the hero of the novel. When the loading was complete, the cart moved away and vanished out of sight.

The boy was very much sad. A tear rolled from his eye into the depth of the well, where he had left his buckets when he went to help his patron and teacher in loading. He drew the water with what was a great effort for one of his stature, filled his buckets and went to his cottage.

II

While emptying the buckets at the back of the house, Jude heard an animated conversation in progress within doors between his aunt and some other villagers. She revealed his past to them. He had, she further remarked, a profound passion for learning.

Jude, finding the general attention centring on himself, went out to the bake-house. where he ate the cake provided for his breakfast. The end of his spare time had now arrived, and he went to the farm of Mr. Troutham, where he was employed as a scaring of birds. He sounded the claker till his arm ached, and at tength his heart grew sympathetic with the birds thwarted desires. They seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which did not want them. He said : "Eat, then, my little birdies, and make a good meal." The farmer heard these words, and he was much offended. He gave him a good beating and turned him out of the farm. The boy wept loudly. Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for. That mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony.

III

Jude was very much eager to know something about Christminster———the city of his hopes and aspirations. He asked a man about the city of Christminster. The man pointed north-east ward, in the very direction where lay that field in which Jude had so disgraced himself. However, he adopted the path, which, at last, joined the highway by a little clump of trees. He had never before stayed so far from the village. Not far from the road stood a weather-beaten old barn of reddish-grey brick and

tile, known as Brown House. He was about to pass it when he perceived a ladder against the eaves; and the reflection that the higher he got, the further he could see, led Jude to climb it. On the slope of the roof, two men were repairing the tiling. When he inquired about the city of Christminster, they told him that the city was not visible in rough weather. The boy awaited till evening. In the evening, the mist vanished; and he had a glimpse of his favourite city. He set himself to wonder on the exact point in the glow where the schoolmaster might be. At last the darkness enveloped the entire phenomenon, and Jude returned home.

IV

One day, the boy happened to meet Physician Vilbert, a well-known figure in the locality. He was wearing an extraordinarily tall hat, an swallon-tailed coat, and a watch-chain that danced madly and threw around scintillations of sky-light as its owner swung along upon a pair of thin legs and noiseless boots. The boy told him about his intention to learn Latin and Greek. The physician, however, suggested that the knowledge of grammar was essential for learning a language. He also promised to provide him books of grammar. Jude was very much delighted with this idea. But the physician's deliberate failure to fulfill his promise caused him much dismay.

One day Mr. Phillotson sent for his pianoforte, and it gave Jude a lead. He wrote a letter to his much-admired friend, requesting him to send him some grammar books. He clandestinely placed the letter inside the packing-case, and awaited the response. At last a packet did indeed arrive at the village; it contained two thin books. But the difficult contents of the books somewhat disappointed him.

V

Jude was a hard-working boy. He endeavoured to make his presence tolerable to his crusty maiden aunt by

assisting her to the best of his ability, and the business of the little cottage bakery grew in consequence. His business was to carry loaves of bread thrice a week to the villagers and solitary cotters immediately around Marygreen. But his passion for learning was always with him; it never abated. It was his habit to read while driving the cart. Moreover, he visited on Sundays all the churches within a walk, and deciphered the Latin inscriptions on them. But his supreme desire was to go to the city of light and knowledge———Christminster. For this purpose, he wanted to become selfsufficient. So he came into the apprenticeship of a stonemason at Alfredston. Here he had the opportunity of learning at least the rudiments of free-stone working. And thus he reached and passed his nineteenth year.

VI

One Saturday Jude was returning from Alfredston to Marygreen about three o' clock in the afternoon. He was in an enthusiastic mood. He seemed to see his way to living comfortably in Christminster in the course of a year or two, and knocking at the doors of one of those strong-holds of learning of which he had dreamed so much. He was much satisfied with the progress of his studies. "I have done some mathematics, including the first six and the eleventh and twelfth books of Euclid; and algebra as far as possible," he said to himself. Suddenly, something smacked him sharply in the ear, and he became aware that a soft, cold substance had been flung at him. He was walking along the hedge. On the other side of the hedge was a stream, whence, as he now for the first time realized, had come the slight sounds of laughters. He mounted the bank and looked over the hedge; in front of him, beside the brook, three young women were washing pigs' chitterlings. 'Thank you!' said Jude severely. "I didn't throw it, I tell you!" asserted one of the girls. The other two girls also uttered similar remarks. She whom he addressed was a fine dark-eyed girl. She had a round and prominent bosom, full lips, perfect teeth, and the rich

complexion of a cochin hen's egg. Her name was Arabella Donn. Jude was very much impressed by her fascinating beauty. She asked him to visit her on next Sunday. Jude accepted the invitation.

VII

It was Sunday afternoon. Jude was pausing in his bedroom, looking at the books on the table. He sat down, and opened the book. But he could not concentrate his attention on the book. His mind was loitering somewhere else. He was thinking about Arabella. A compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him——— some thing which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto. He put the book aside, and adopted the road which led to the house of Arabella. Her father opened the door ; at the same time she herself came down stairs in radiant walking attire. She looked so handsome amid her untidy surroundings that he felt glad he had come, and all the misgivings vanished that had hitherto haunted him. Eventually, they set out to enjoy a light walk.

They reached the Brown House barn. While looking over the vast northern landscape from this spot, they were struck by the rising of a dense volume of smoke from the neighbourhood of the little town which lay beneath them at the distance of a couple of miles. They started off down the hill almost at a trot ; but on gaining level ground at the bottom, and walking a mile, they found that the spot of the fire was much further off than it had seemed. Having begun their journey, however, they pushed on ; but they reached the scene quite late. The fire had been extinguished by the time they reached it.

Since they were tired, they entered an inn of an inferior class and ordered for beer. Arabella remarked that the wine was adulterated ; however she drank her share. They came out of the inn, and walked hand in hand. When they were half way up the hill they paused as by arrangement, and he kissed her. When he got back to his house, his

aunt had gone to bed, and a general consciousness of his neglect seemed written on the face of all things confronting him.

VIII

Once Jude was returning from Alfredson. He digressed from his path with the single purpose of gaining a glimpse of Arabella. Entering the gate he found that three young pigs had escaped from their sty, and that she was endeavouring unassisted to drive them in through the door. He set himself to assist, and dodged this way and that over the potato-rows and cabbages. Every now and then they ran together. He caught her for a moment and kissed her. The pigs ran out of the garden. They followed them. Arabella was getting out of breath. She flung herself down on the sod under a stunted thorn. She lay supine, and straight as an arrow, gazing up into the blue miles of sky, and still retaining her warm hold of Jude's hand. He reclined on his elbow near her. Suddenly she walked off quickly homeward ; Jude followed her like a pet lamb. Thus they descended to the precints of her father's homestead, and Arabella went in, nodding good-bye to him with a supercilious, affected air.

On Sunday morning the interior of Arabella's home was, as usual, the scene of grand weekly cooking, the preparation of the special Sunday dinner. In the afternoon Arabella met and walked with Jude, who had now for weeks ceased to look into a book of Greek, Latin, or any other language. When they came back, the door was locked ; the family had gone to church. However, Arabella knew the place of the key, and she opened the door. Indoors they went. They sat down———naturally enough close together. Jude wanted to kiss her. But she withdrew into another room. They chased each other in the darkness.

IX

Jude paid frequent visits to Arabella. Eventually, they agreed to get married. The people of the parish were

very much surprised. They never thought that Jude would give up his intellectual pursuits for the sake of a rustic girl of easy virtue. His aunt made him a bride-cake, saying bitterly that it was the last thing she could do for him. Jude himself was not happy with the behaviour of his wife. She wore false hair; she also tried to produce artificial dimples in her cheeks. Briefly speaking, she was not a refined and cultured woman. On the contrary, she was coarse and vulgar. Jude was caught in a gin which was bound to cripple him.

X

The time arrived for killing the pig which Jude and his wife had fattened in their sty during the autumn months. The butchering was timed to take place as soon as it was light in the morning. Jude's wife directed him to make the water hot. He complied with her direction, and went downstairs to boil the water. At half-past six, the time of appointment with the butcher, the water boiled, and his wife came downstairs. The snow was not enough to hinder the butcher; but he did not come. Jude was of the opinion that slaughtering should be postponed. But Arabella insisted upon its immediate execution. At last, he agreed to kill the pig. While Jude held him, Arabella bound him down, looping the cord over his legs to keep him from struggling. Then he plunged knife into his throat with all his might. The blood flowed out in a torrent instead of in the trickling stream she had wished. He felt dissatisfied with himself as a man at what he had done. No doubt, he was, as his wife called him, 'a tender-hearted fool.'

XI

The differences between Jude and Arabella became more apparent and accentuated. Their matrimonial life was far from being successful. One day, she threw his books on the table. When he asked her to refrain from such idiotic acts, she went out of the room, cursing him

severely. She continued to speak bitter and provoking language. Jude went to see his aunt at Marygreen.

When he returned in the evening, Arabella was not present in the house. Her whereabouts were unknown. After three days, he received a letter from her. She wanted to go to Australia with her parent. Jude replied that he had not the least objection to her going. Thus a separation took place between them.

PART SECOND

At Christminster

I

Jude shifted from Alfredson to Christminster——— the city of his dreams. His cousin, Sue Bridehead, was also living in this city. He had not met her; he had only seen her photograph on the mantlepiece of his aunt. The photograph possessed a peculiar charm; Jude was very much impressed by it.

He wandered in the city, and saw many colleges and institutions. He began to be encircled by the grandeur and sentiment of the venerable city. But, at the same time, he was actually aware of his own isolation. He went home and to bed. He did not wake till morning. The ghostly past seemed to have gone; and everything spoke of today. He said: "By Jove———I had quite forgotton my sweet-faced cousin and my old schoolmaster." His words about his schoolmaster had, perhaps, less zest in them than his words concerning his cousin.

II

Necessary meditations on the actual compelled Jude to give up high thinkings. His attention was concentrated on immediate needs. He tried to find out a suitable job for himself. But he also thought deeply about his beautiful

cousin. He wanted to have her portrait. He wrote to his aunt to send it. She did so, with a request, however, that he was not to bring disturbance into the family by going to see the girl or his relations.

Every day, every hour, as he went in search of labour, he saw scholars and students going to and coming from colleges, heard their voices, marked their movements. At last he received a message from the stonemason——that a job was waiting for him. It was his first encouragement, and he accepted the offer promptly.

One day he entered a shop to purchase certain articles. The shop seemed to be kept entirely by women. He felt very shy of looking at the girl in the desk. She was quite a long way removed from the rusticity that was his. The girl was Sue Bridehead. Jude felt strong passion for her; but he did not accost her.

III

Next Sunday Jude went to the morning service in the Cathedral-church of Cardinal College to gain a further view of Sue, because he had found that she frequently attented there. A few minutes before the hour for service, she appeared in the church. But he moved aside. To see her, and to be himself unseen and unknown, was sufficient for the moment. The girl for whom he was beginning to nourish an extraordinary tenderness, was at this time ensphered by the same harmonies as those which floated into his ears; and the thought was a delight to him. She was probably a frequenter of this place, and, steeped body and soul in church sentiment as she must be by occupation and habit, had, no doubt, much in common with him. She did not look towards him, and by the time he reached the door; she was half way down the broad path.

Once Sue went out for a light stroll. She came across a man who was selling plaster statues. Without any preconceived notion, she bought the statuettes of Cupid and Venus. She covered them with leaves and other

rank growths from the hedge. Being of a nervous temperament, she trembled at her enterprice. Her purchases were taken straight to her own room, and she at once locked them in a box that was her very own property. However, she was very zealous for unpacking her objects and looking at them ; and at bedtime, when she was sure of being undisturbed, she unrobed the divinities in comfort. Placing the pair of figures on the chest of drawers, a candle on each side of them, she began looking at them. She drew a strange delight from their sight and presence.

IV

Jude was a handy man at his trade, an all-round man, as artizans in country-town are apt to be. When there was not much Gothic moulding for him to run, or much window-tracery on bankers, he would go out lettering monuments or tomb-stones, and take a pleasure in the change of handiwork.

The next time that Jude saw Sue was when he was on a ladder, executing a job of this sort inside one of churches. There was a short morning service ; and when the parson entered, Jude came down from his ladder, and sat down with the half-dozen people forming the congregation. He did not observe till the service was half over that one of the women was, Sue Bridehead. He sat, watching he pretty shoulders, her easy, curiously nonchalant risings and sittings, and thought what a help such an Anglican would have been to him in happier circumstances. She was an ideality to him.

One afternoon a young girl entered the stone-mason's yard. She spoke with nobody and crossed towards the office. She was Sue Bridehead. Jude decided to call upon her that very evening. When he reached his lodgings, he found a note from her. He wrote in response that he was eager to see her. She came according to the appointment. The meeting was a cordial one. Sue, during the conversation, referred to Mr. Phillotson, who was

still a schoolmaster. Jude's countenance fell, for how could he succeed in an enterprice wherein the great Phillotson has failed? They decided to call upon the schoolmaster. But when they met him, he could not recognise them. Jude made some hints about his past at Marygreen, and Mr. Phillotson was able to recognise his old pupil. The old friendship was imperceptibly renewed; the schoolmaster spoke of his experiences, and the cousins of theirs. However, they did not stay for supper. Sue having to be indoors before it grew late. When they were coming back, she informed him about an unhappy incident. She told him that one of her partners, Miss Tontover, had broken her statuary. Jude suggested her to adopt the profession of teaching. Mr. Phillotson, he said, would help her in becoming a certificated mistress. Sue accepted the proposal without any reluctance. When Jude consulted the schoolmaster, he also expressed his willingness to help her to the hilt.

V

Sue Bridehead was appointed as a pupil-teacher in the school of Mr. Phillotson, Having taught for some two years in London, though she had abandoned that vocation of late, she was note exactly a novice, and the schoolmaster thought there would be no difficulty in retaining her services.

Once the children were to be taken to see an itinerant exhibition, in the shape of a model of Jerusalem, to which schools were admitted at a penny a head in the interest of education. The children marched along the road two and two, Sue behind her class; and Mr. Phillotson behind in his long dangling coat. The model of the ancient city stood in the middle of the apartment, and the proprieter, with a fine religious philanthropy written on his features, walked round with a pointer in his hand, showing the people various places. Sue thought the model to be an imaginary production. But Mr. Phillotson did not agree with her. He held the view that the model

was based on actual visits to the city. Sue, in the meantime, caught sight of Jude, who had also come to exhibition. She went to him, and they talked together for a long time.

VI

Jude's old aunt lay unwell at Marygreen, and on the following Sunday he went to see her. She was now unable to leave her bed, and a great part of Jude's short day was occupied in making arrangements for her comfort. The little bakery business was sold to a neighbour, his aunt upbraided him for his unsuccessful with Arabella. Jude left the cottage with a heavy heart.

During the next week or two, he placed himself in such positions about the city as would afford him glimpses of severals of the most distinguished among the Provosts, Wardens and other Heads of Houses ; and from those he ultimately selected fives whose physiognomies seemed to say to him that they were appreciative and far-seeing men. To these five he addressed letters, briefly stating his difficulties, and asking their opinion on his stranded situation. But the academic dignitaries to whom Jude had written vouchsafed no answer, and the young man was thus thrown back on entirely on himself, as formerly, with the added gloom of a weakened hope. His scheme had burst up like an iridescent soap bubble under the touch of a reasoned inquiry. Now he began to see that the town life was a book of humanity infinitely more palpitating, varied and compendious than the gown life. Thus his attitudes underwent a modification——— a modification which was neither positive, nor negative.

VII

Jude did not take any interest in his work. He was deeply dejected. There was a low-ceiled tavern near his lodging. Here he sat more or less all the day, convinced that he was at bottom a vicious character, of whom it was hopeless to expect anything.

One night Jude drank heavily, and inched his way towards Sue's house. He tapped with his fingers on the pane. She recogised his voice and took him into the house. Almost immediately he fell into a heavy slumber, and did not wake till dawn. When he awoke it was as if he had awakened in hell——the hell of conscious failure, both in ambition and in love. He took his hat from the nail on which Sue had hung it and slipped noiselessly out of the house.

PART THIRD

At Melchester

I

Sue Bridehead passed some sort of examination for a Queen's Scholarship, and joined a Training College at Melchester. But she hated the place was in ; it was worse than the ecclesiastical designer's ; wore than anywhere. It was Mr. Phillotson who had advised her to come there, and she wished she had never listened to him. One day, she wrote a letter to Jude. She was quite lonely and miserable, she told him. Jude at once decided to visit her.

Jude and Sue were walking on the main road of Melchester. Their talk was centred only on the passing moments. She did not tell anything about her relations with Mr. Phillotson. Jude took he to an inn and ordered whatever the house afforded. When they had eaten, he impulsively placed his hand upon hers ; she looked up and smiled, and took his quite freely into her own little soft one. She told him about her engagement with Mr. Phillotson. The News broke like a thunder upon him. He was very much disappointed. He took her to the college-gate, and they parted.

Jude decided to settle in this town. He set about seeking employment, which it was not so easy to get as

Christminster. However, he succeeded in his efforts and found a job at the cemetery on the hill.

II

Jude paid frequent visits to Sue Bridehead. Once they decided to visit Corinthian———the favourite town of Sue. Though they were alone in the compartment, they mostly remained silent. Sue uttered a few humorous remarks, but Jude gave no response. His mind was lost in abstract contemplation. They reached the Park and Castle and wandered through the picturegalleries, Jude stopping by preference in front of the devotional pictures by Del Sarto, Guido Reni and Spangnoletto. They missed the evening train, and spent night in the cottage of a shepherd. However, they returned to Melchester by the morning train. Sue Bridehead could not reach her college in time.

III

The school-mates of Sue were sitting in a large school-room on the evening previously described. They were talking about the absence of Sue Bridehead. At nine o'clock the names were called, Sue's being pronounced three times snorously by Miss Traceley without eliciting an answer. After evening-prayers, the girls went to their beds. Sue was still missing. One of the mistresses came in to turn out the lights, and before doing so gave a final glance at her cot, which was empty.

Sue became a bit late next morning. When she came into the dormitory to hastily tidy herself, no girl came out to greet her or to make inquiry. The principal's orders were that no body was to speak to her without permission. She was severely reprimanded, and ordered to a solitary room for a week, there to be confined, and take her meals, and do all her reading. But Sue escaped through the back-window, and went to the lodge of Jude.

IV

Sue Bridehead's clothes were wet. Moreover, she was feeling weakness. Jude gave her dry clothes to wear. The supper fortified her somewhat, and when she had some tea and had lain back again she was bright and cheerful. She chatted light-heartedly. She talked about her friendship with a young man, who was well versed in classical languages. He died due to her indifferent behaviour and apathy. "You are as innocent as you are unconventional" ! exclaimed Jude, who was taking deep interest in the conversation. But he was sick at heart. They sat on till she fell asleep, and he nodded in his chair likewise.

V

When he aroused himself, he turned her wet clothes, and made up the fire anew. Placing the garments by her and touching her on the shoulder he went downstairs, and washed himself by starlight in the yard. When he returned, she was dressed as usual. She wanted to leave immediately, but he persuaded her to let him make her a cup of coffee. They went quietly out of the house, Jude accompanying her to the station.

After the lapse of a few days, Jude wrote to her. He waited for a response, but she gave none. His first and natural thought had been that she was ill. He went to see her. Actually she had caught a bad cold, and was not in a position to move. Sue's kind hostess soon returned from the church and there was no more intimate conversation. Jude returned in the evening, hopelessly unhappy.

VI

Mr. Phillotson was thinking about the charming beauty of Sue Bridehead. He was now the headmaster of a large boy's school in his native town of Shaston. He took from his drawer a carefully tied bundle of letters, written by Sue. He unfolded them one by one and

read them musingly. Then he opened another drawer, and found therein an envelope, from which he drew a photograph of Sue as a child, long before he had known her, standing under trellis-work with a small basket in her hand. He kissed the photograph with all the passionateness of a young man of eighteen. He repeated these proceeding almost daily.

He set out one Saturday afternoon to pay Sue an un-expected call. But when he reached the college, he came to know about her expulsion. Then he came across Jude, who gave him a detailed account of the episode which led to Sue's expulsion. Mr. Phillotson was somewhat embarrassed. He bade the young man good-day, and went away.

When Jude went to have his dinner, he saw his beloved ahead of him in the street. She had come to get her things from the college. During the conversation, he hinted about his marriage with Arabella. Sue lost control over herself. She cried passionately. He tried to take her hand, but she withdrew it. Their old relations of confidence seem suddenly to have ended.

VII

After a few days, Sue Bridehead wrote to Jude that her marriage with Mr. Phillotson was going to take place shortly. Jude staggered under the news; could eat no breakfast; and kept on drinking tea because his mouth was so dry. Everything seemed turning to satire. 'You don't know what marriage means'! was his remark. He asked her to come into residence on the following Saturday, which would allow of a ten day's stay in the city prior to the ceremony. She arrived by the ten o'clock train on the day aforesaid. After breakfast they went out on an errand together moved by a mutual thought that it was the last opportunity they would have of indulging in unceremonious companionship. But the first person they encountered on entering the main street was the schoolmaster himself, whose train had arrived sooner

than Sue expected. She withdrew her hand; and Jude thought that Phillotson had looked surprised.

They went to the church to sign their names in the marriage-register. Sue seemed to be nervous. But, after the ceremony, she felt relieved. The meal at Jude lodging was a very simple affair and at two o'clock they went away. She looked into Jude's eyes with her own tearful ones, and her lips suddenly parted as if she was going to avow something. But she went on; and whatever she had meant to say remained unspoken.

VIII

Jude could not stay in his silent lodging when they were gone, and fearing that he might be tempted to drown his misery in alcohol he went upstairs, changed his dark clothes for his white, and proceeded to his customary work for the afternoon. But in the cathedral he seemed to hear a voice behind him to be possessed with an idea that she would come back.

He, later on, received the news that his old aunt was dangerously ill at Marygreen. He started to visit her, and found her even worse than the communication from the Widow Edlin had led him to expect. He wrote to Sue informing her of the state of her aunt, and suggesting that she might like to see her aged relative alive. Next morning, he went to Chrisminster in search of job. The city of learning wore an estranged look, and he had lost all feeling for its associations. Feeling tired, he went to a bar. The barmaid was invisible to Judes direct glance, though a reflection of her back in the glass behind her was occasionally caught by his eyes. When she turned her face for a moment to the glass to set her hair tidy, he was amazed to discover that the face was Arabella's. The compartment that she served emptied itself of visitors, and after a brief thought he entered it and went forward to the counter. Arabella did not recognise him first. Their glances met and she started. They came out of the bar. He told her that he wanted

to visit his seriously ill aunt. Arabella decided to go with him; they started towards the station. They were to return to Christminster next morning.

IX

Arabella and Jude were alone in the compartment. Having, like Jude, made rather a hastly toilet to catch the train, Arabella looked a little frowsy, and her face was very far from possessing the animation which had characterized it at the bar the night before. She revealed her secrets to him. She told him about he love-affairs with a young man in Australia and her subsequent marriage with him. She also implored him not to reveal her secrets to anybody. Jude was very much puzzled by this revelation. He dubbed this marriage as "crime". Thus they parted. Arabella disappeared in the direction of the hotel where she was employed; Jude returned back to station.

Drawing towards the station he started at hearing his name pronounced———less at the name than at the voice. To his great surprise no other than Sue stood like a vision before him. They looked away from each other to hide their emotions, took each other's hand without further speech and went on together. Their talk proceeded but awkwardly till they reached Marygreen. By the fireplace sat the old woman, wrapped in blankets. She asked Sue as to why she married Mr. Phillotson. She gave no reply; her eyes were wet with tears. In the afternoon, she prepared to depart. She waved her hand and was gone.

Before Jude had returned from Marygreen to Melchester, there arrived a letter from Arabella. The letter bore a London postmark instead of the Christminster one. She informed him that a few days after their parting in the morning at Christminster, she had been surprised by an affectionate letter from her Australian husband. He had come to England on purpose to find her; and taken a free, fully-licenced public-house in Lambeth,

where he wished her to join him in conducting the business. Jude felt a severe shock.

X

Jude returned to Melchester, which had the questionable recommendation of being only a dozen and a half miles from his Sue's new permanent residence. He now returned with feverish desperation to his studies for priethood. But he perceived with despondency that, taken all round, he was a man of too many passions to make a good clergyman ; the utmost he could hope for was that in a life of constant internal warfare between flesh and spirit the former might not always be victorious.

As a hobby, auxiliary to his readings in Divinity, he developed his slight skill in church-music, till he could join in part-singing from notation with some accuracy. He decided to call upon the composer, who, he thought, might be helpful to him in acquiring perfect skill in music. The musician met him warmly and spoke in an exaggerated tone about his compositions. But when he came to know that Jude was a poor person, his style and manner of talking changed. Jude was embarrassed and took his leave. When he reached his Melchester lodging, he found a letter from Sue Bridehead : she had invited him to her residence. Jude almost tore his hair at having missed this letter till it was too late to act upon its contents. However, he started for his destination———the house of Sue Bridehead.

PART FOURTH

At Shaston

I

Shaston was in itself the city of dreams. Vague imaginings of its castle, its magnificent apsidal Abbey, the chief glory of South Wessex, its twelve churches,

its shrines, its gabled freestone mansions———all now ruthlessly swept away———throw the visitors into a pensive melancholy. The natural picturesqueness and singularity of the town still remain. There is another peculiarity which Shaston appears to owe to its site. It is the resting-place and headquarter of the proprietors of wandering vans, shows, shows, shooting-galleries and other itinerant concerns.

It was to this breezy and whimsical spot that Jude ascended from the nearest station for the first time in his life. He drew towards the school-house. Unwilling to enter till the children were dismissed, he remained here till the school time was over. Jude went into the empty room, and sat down. After a few minutes, Sue also came there. By an unpremeditated instinct they clasped each other's hand. Sue relinquished his hand, and remarked that they were alike in feelings, but not in thoughts. In the meantime, the maid-servant came in with tea. When they were sipping the hot tea, Sue uttered a peculiar remark. She said : "Some women's love of being loved is insatiable. But you are so straight forward, Jude, that you can't understand me" ! At the same time she requested him to leave her alone. Jude went away quietly.

When he was gone, Sue opened a rosewood work-box and looked deeply at a photograph. Having contemplated it a little, she pressed it against her bosom, and put it again in its place.

II

Sue Bridehead wrote to Jude, and requested him not to visit her again. He acquiesced with her request. There seemed a finality in their decisions. But other laws and forces than theirs were in operation. One morning Jude received a message from the Widow Eldin that his aunt was sinking. He started at once to Marygreen. His aunt had died ; he felt a deep remorse. He wrote to Sue about the death of his aunt. She came but with a pensive smile on her dejected face. Drusilla was put

into the grave, quite away from her ancestors. The sad and simple ceremony was soon over. Jude and Sue returned to their familiar cottage. She wanted to leave immediately. But the train for Shaston was not available. So she was coerced to spend night at Marygreen. Jude's mind was still haunted by the strange remark of Sue. She had said : "I like Mr. Phillotson as a friend, I don't like him———it is a torture to me to———live with him as a husband" ! This remark indicated that her matrimonial life was far from being successful. Jude tried to interpret this remark, but he could not reach any conclusion.

III

Jude went to bid farewell to his cousin, Sue Bridehead. They parted from each other in estrangement ; but after covering some distance, they looked round simultaneously. That look behind was fatal to the reverse hitherto maintained. They quickly ran back, and met, and embracing most unpremeditatedly, kissed close and long. When they parted again it was with flushed cheeks on her side, and a beating heart on his.

Jude went into the garden and dug a shallow hole, to which he brought out all theological and ethical works, that he possessed, and had stored here. He, then, set them on fire till they were more or less consumed.

Meanwhile Sue, after parting from him earlier in the day, had gone along to station, with tears in her eyes for having run back and let him kiss her. Phillotson met her at the arrival station, and seeing that she was troubled, thought it must be owing to the depressing effect of her aunt's death and funeral. But Sue narrated to him the kiss incident. They lapsed into silence. After tea that evening Phillotson sat balancing the school registers. She remained in an unusually silent, tense and restless condition, and, at last, saying she was tired, went to bed early. When Phillotson arrived upstairs, it was quarter to twelve o'clock. But Sue was not present in her room.

He called her name. She answered 'Yes' ! as before, but the tones seemed to be coming from clothes-closet, which was situated under the stair-case. She implored him not to disturb her, and he went away quietly. On rising next morning he immediately looked into the closet, but Sue had already gone upstairs. He found her sitting at the breakfast-table. She asked whether he would mind her living away from him. Phillotson was very much puzzled by this question. He, however, requested her to give him some time for consideration.

IV

Phillotson was now deeply interested in Roman antiquities, his long-neglected hobby. His preoccupation was such that, though he now slept on the other side of the house, he mechanically went to the room that he and his wife had occupied when he first became a tenant of old-Grove place, which since his differences with Sue had become hers exclusively. He entered, and unconsciously began to undress. Sue uttered a cry and jumped out of the window. Since the window was situated on a lower level, she received no injuries.

The state of affairs had become very serious ; and, in the evening, Mr. Phillotson went out for consultations with his friend, Mr. Gillingham. He disclosed the entire situation to his friend, and also hinted about his willingness to permit his wife to go wherever she liked. But his friend insisted on detaining her. The difference in their approach could not be removed, and Phillotson returned home. He told his wife that she was at liberty to go wherever she liked, and that he had no objection, whatsoever. He also helped her in her preparations for departure. She parted from him with tearful eyes.

V

Before her departure, Sue Bridehead wrote a letter to Jude. When she alighted at the Melchester platform, she was received by Jude, who was dressed in the dark suit he

wore on Sundays. He looked very handsome young fellow, his ardent affection for her burning in his eyes. She clasped his hand with both hers, and her tense state caused her to simmer over in a little succession of dry sobs. Then they started towards Aldbrickham. They stayed at The George Inn. Jude had stayed at this inn with Arabella on the occasion of their meeting after their division for years. Owing, however, to their now entering it by another door, and to his preoccupation, he did not at first recognize the place. When they had engaged their respective rooms, they went down to a late supper. During Jude's temporary absence, the waiting-maid told Sue that her friend or relative had, once come there with his wife. When Jude came back and sat down to supper, Sue seemed moping and miserable. The place was intolerable for her simply because Jude had been living there with another woman, Arabella. His explanations could not satisfy her; and they went to their rooms.

VI

Sue Bridehead's permanent absence became a scandal in the town. Phillotson's own character was severely criticised, and his reputation suffered a set-back. The chairman of the School Committee requested him to tender his resignation on account of scandalous rumours about his character. But he plainly refused to comply with the request. Consequently, he was dismissed from the school. Mr. Phillotson did not accept the dismissal from the school, and called a public meeting. He challenged the decision of the school authorities. He advanced his arguments in an emphatic manner and contended that his private conduct did not come in the sphere of their control. The meeting was disrupted by a scuffle, in which many persons received injuries.

The tragic event was the beginning of a serious illness for him; and he lay in his lonely bed in the pathetic state of mind of a middle-aged man who perceived that his life, intellectual and domestic, was tending to failure and gloom.

Mr. Gillingham wrote to Sue about her husband's serious illness. Sue was kind-hearted enough to pay him a brief visit.

PART FIFTH

At Aldbrickham And Elsewhere

I

Sue and Jude were living in Aldbrickham, though not legally married. But the people were not aware of their actual relations. Sue, like an ordinary wife, kept the house and managed every thing.

Once they decided to go out for a walk in the fields. They rambled out of the town, and along a path over the low-lying lands that bordered it, though they were frosty now, and the extensive fields were bare of colour and produce. The pair, however, were so absorbed in their own situation that their surroundings were little in their consciousness. Their talk was centred round marriage and the problems resulting from it. The matrimonial experiences of the Fowley family were tragic failures; the reason being either the lack of practical wisdom, or the influence of some malicious fate. This was the observation of Mr. Jude; and it was, to a large extent, true and valid.

Sue was assisting Jude very materially now: he had latterly occupied himself on his own account in working and lettering head-stones, which he kept in a little yard at the back of his little house, where in the intervals of domestic duties she marked out the letters full size for him, and blacked them in after he had cut them. It was the only arrangement under which Sue, who practically wished to be no burden on him, could render any assistance.

II

One day Jude returned home after hearing a lecture on

ancient history in the public hall. When he entered, Sue, who had been keeping indoors during his absence, laid out supper for him. Her face was depressed. She imparted an astonishing information to him. Arabella had come to discourse with him on certain confidential matters. Sue's voice was chocked with emotions; her eyes were moisted with tears. Jude tried to pacify her by saying that she was nothing to him, and virtuously married to another man. But Sue regarded her visit as an ill-omen, and could not eat any supper.

Jude was making preparations to go upstairs when he heard a knock at the door. He opened the door and found Arabella standing before him. She implored him to listen to her in privacy. Sue tried to detain him; but he paid no heed to her arguments and went out of the house. Since he could not find her in the street, he repaired to the house shortly.

Sue realized the absurdity of her behaviour and decided to call upon Arabella. Next morning, she went to the public-house mentioned by her, which was not very far off. She (Arabella) spoke in a supercilious tone; she also expressed her intention to go back to her husband, who was living in Lambeth. She regretted her failure to talk to Jude. She, however, requested her to send him to the station for talks. Sue returned home in a perplexed state of mind.

III

After a few days, a letter and a newspaper arrived from Arabella. Seeing the hand writing Jude went up to Sue's room and told her, and as soon as she was dressed she hastened down. Sue opened the newspaper; Jude the letter. The newspaper contained the advertisement of the marriage of Arabella and Cartlett, the innkeeper. The letter, however, revealed a very startling fact. The letter ran thus; "Dear Jude............The fact is that I have never informed you before, there was a boy born of our marriage, eight months after I left you, when I was at Sydney, living

with my father and mother......... He is now of an intelligent age, of course, and my mother and father have lately written to say that, as they have rather a hard struggle over there, and I am settled comfortably here, they don't see why they should be encumbered with the child any longer, his parents being alive. I would have him with me in a moment, but he is not old enough to be of any use in the bar, and naturally Cartlett might think him in the way. They have, however, packed him off to me in charge of a few friends who happened to be coming home, and I don't know what to do with him. I request you to take him when he arrives..........." They looked at each other with dismay. Jude, however, decided to keep the child with him. The child reached Aldbrickham by the evening train. When he knocked at the door, Jude and Sue were making preparations for going to their beds. Jude opened the door hastely; Sue looked at the child with curiosity, and then burst into tears.

IV

Jude and Sue Bridehead decided to unite themselves in the bond of legal wedlock. Their position lent them shyness, and having an impression that a marriage at a Superintendent Registrar's office was more private than an ecclesiastical one, they decided to avoid church. Meanwhile Jude decided to link his present with his past in some slight degree by inviting to the wedding the only person remaining on the earth who was associated with his early life at Marygreen ——— the aged widow Mrs. Edlin, who had been his great-aunt's friend and nurse in her last illness.

Next morning, they started arm in arm for the office aforesaid, no witness accompanying them except the Widow Edlin. When they reached the office, a marriage between a soldier and a young woman was already in progress. Sue began to nourish doubts and horrors in the her mind. She wanted the marriage to be conducted in the church. Jude could not resist her desire. Consequently, they came out of the office. Thus the marriage function was again put off.

V

"The Great Wessex Agricultural Show" was held at Stoke-Barehills. Rows of marqueens, huts, booths, pavilions, arcades, porticoes——every kind of structure short of a permanent one——covered the green field for the space of a square half-mile; and the crowds of arrivals walked through the town in a mass, and made straight for the exhibition ground. Arabella and her husband were also loitering there. Suddenly her attention was attracted by a young couple leading a child, who had come out from the second platform, into which the train from Aldbrickham had steamed. They were Jude, Sue Bridehead and 'Little Time', her own son.

Arabella so regulated her pace and her husband's as to keep just in the rear of the other three, which it was easy to do without notice in such a stream of pedestrians. Her answers to Cartlett's remark's were vague and slight, for the group in front interested her more than all the rest of the spectacle. All continued to move ahead. The unwitting Sue and Jude, the couple in question, had determined to make this agricultural exhibition within twenty miles of their own town the occasion of a day's excursion which should combine exercise and amusement with instruction, at small expense. They all sauntered about in different pavilions, Arabella chasing them closely. Jude and Sue were in high spirits; their manners betrayed their intense delight in the environment. Arabella waited a few minutes observing them, and then went away with her husband. But Jude and Sue entered into the pavilion of flowers.

VI

People criticised in sharp tones the life of the pair. The curious facts of a child coming to them unexpectedly, who called Jude father, and Sue mother, and a hitch in a marriage ceremony intended for quietness to be performed at a registrar's office, together with rumours of the undefended cases in the law-courts——all these facts created doubts in the minds of the people of the locality. Little

Time was not happy with his school-mates who taunted him about his nominal mother. In the meantime Jude was also dismissed from the church repairs. He was now a jobless person. He was as disqualified for ecclesiastical art as Sue was for teaching. They set their furniture at auction to get whatever they could. The family was caught in the snare of hostile circumstances and misfortunes.

VII

Jude and Sue Bridehead shifted to some other place. Where they had gone nobody knew, chiefly because nobody cared to know. Wherever Jude heard of freestone work to be done, there he went, choosing by preference places remote from his old haunts and Sue's. He laboured at a job, long or brief, till it was finished ; and then moved on.

Jude caught a chill while putting up some stonework of a music-hall, at Quartershot, which he had to do in the rain, the work having to be executed by a fixed day. Since he was not in a position to work, Sue undertook the business of cake-selling. Her earning was sufficient for the support of the family.

VIII

Sue was remarkably successful in her cake-selling business; but her natural brightness had vanished. The family was now residing in a dun-tiled cottage, not very far from the town. Jude's health was improving gradually. One day, Arabella met Sue Bridehead. Her husband had died, and she was leading a miserable life at Alfredstone. Sue was very much moved by her deplorable plight. In the evening, she narrated the entire story to Jude; he remained silent and did not utter any remark, good or bad.

The family decided to settle once again in the town of Christminster.

PART SIXTH

At Christminster Again

I

Having reached Christminster, they (Jude and Sue) set out in quest of the lodging. No body seemed to be willing to accommodate them. They tried another house. The woman here was more amiable; but she had little room to spare, and could only agree to take in Sue and the children if her husband could go elsewhere. They came to terms with her, though her price was rather high for their pockets. Leaving Sue and children in the room, he went out to look for lodgings for himself. When he was gone the landlady came up to talk a little with Sue, and gather some thing of the circumstances of the family she had taken in. Sue hesitated, and then impulsively told the woman that her husband and herself had each been unhappy in their first marriages, after which, terrified at the thought of a second irrevocable union, and lest the conditions of the contract should kill their love, yet wishing to be together, they had literally not found the courage to repeat it, though they had attempted it two or three times. Therefore, though in her own sense of words she was a married woman, in the landlady's sense she was not. The house-wife looked embarrassed, and went downstairs. The landlady's husband also arrived. When he heard about the new lodgers' he flew into a rage. He did not want the point of the stair-case to be spoiled by children. The landlady came upstairs and asked Sue to vacate the house next morning. Though she knew that she was entitled to the lodging for a week, she did not wish to create a disturbance between the husband and the wife, and she said she would leave as requested.

II

The house they occupied was little more than an old intramural cottage. The failure to find another lodging,

and the lack of room in this house for his father, made a deep impression on Little Time———a brooding undemonstrative horror seemed to have seized him. He went away into the closet adjoining Sue's room in which a bed had been spread on the floor. There she heard him saying: "If we children were gone, there'd be no trouble at all!"

The next morning Sue awoke a little past six, and decided to get up and run across before breakfast to the inn which Jude had informed her to be his quarters, to tell him what had happened before he went out. She arose softly, to avoid disturbing the children, who, as she knew, must be fatigued by their exertion of yesterday. She found Jude at breakfast in the obscure tavern he had chosen as a counter-poise to the expenses of her lodging; and she explained to him her homelessness. Jude invited her to breakfast; she joined him in a hasty meal, and in a quarter of an hour they came back. But when they entered the room, their eyes beheld the most tragic and terrible scene. The elder boy, on waking, looked into the outer room for Sue, and, finding her absent, was thrown into a fit of aggravated despondency that the events and the information of the previous evening had induced in his morbid temperament. He strangulated the children to death, and, later on, killed himself in the same manner. Sue was deeply grieved by this incident; her condition was very precarious. She was attended upon by a doctor. In the evening, she gave premature birth to a dead baby.

III

Sue was convalescent, though she had hoped for death, and Jude had again obtained work at his old trade. They were in other lodgings now, in the direction of Beersheba. They would sit silent, more bodeful of the direct antagonism of things than of their insensate and solid obstructiveness.

One thing troubled Jude most; that Sue and himself had mentally travelled in opposite directions since the

tragedy: events which had enlarged his own views of life, laws, customs and dogmas, had not operated in the same manner on Sue's. She was no longer the same as in independent days, when her intellect played like lambent lightning over conventions and formalities which he at that time respected, though he did not know. On a particular Sunday evening he came in rather late. Sue spoke in a tone which was rather unfamiliar. She said: "I have thought that we have been selfish, careless, even impious, in our courses, you and I. Our life has been a vain attempt at self-delight. But self-abnegation in the higher road. We should mortify the flesh——the terrible flesh——the curse of Adam!" Jude was very much disturbed by these remarks. He tried to pacify her, but there was no perceptible change in her attitude. She insisted on her going back to her legal husband, Phillotson. Jude could not ascribe any reason for this change; he was confounded. Arabella was also present in the house; she was taking keen interest in Sue's remarks.

IV

The man whom Sue was now regarding as her inseparable husband, lived still at Marygreen. On the day before the tragedy of children, Phillotson had seen both her and Jude as they stood in the rain at Christminster. But he had said nothing of it at the moment to his companion, Gillingham, who being an old friend, was staying with him at the village aforesaid, and had, indeed, suggested the day's trip to Christminster. However, at the end of the week, he went back to his school near Shaston.

One day Mr. Phillotson met Arabella. She conveyed to him all the information regarding Sue and her relations with Jude. She said: "She has never really married him although they have passed as man and wife so long. And she says, so I was told, that she's your wife in the eye of Heaven and the Church——yours only; and can't be anybody else's by an act of man." Phillotson was very much surprised by the change in Sue's attitudes.

He wrote a carefully considered epistle to her. He stated that, it having come to his knowledge that her views had considerably changed, he felt compelled to say that his own, too, were largely modified by events subsequent to their parting. He suggested that she should come to him there at Marygreen.

V

Next day Sue Bridehead left Christminster for Marygreen, Jude had no heart to go to his work that day. He was dejected and depressed. The world seemed to be dreary and flat.

When Sue reached the house of Mr. Phillotson, he greeted her with an open heart. He accosted her as "Darling Susanna." But she was perplexed. Her look was that of the condemned criminal who catches the sight of his coffin. The next morning came. They went to the church, and signed their names in the marriage register. When the book was signed, the vicar congratulated the husband and the wife on having performed a noble and righteous, and mutually forgiving act.

VI

The place was the door of Jude's lodging in the outskirts of Christminster. The rain was coming down. A woman is shabby, black clothes stood on the doorstep, talking to Jude, who held the door in his hand. "I am lonely, destitute, and homeless ——— that's what I am! Father has turned me out of doors after borrowing every penny I'd got, to put it into his business, and then accusing me of laziness when I was only waiting for a situation." The woman in the rain who spoke thus was Arabella, the evening being that of the day after Sue's Marriage with Phillotson. Unable to be harsh with her, Jude accommodated her in the little attic.

Jude was very anxious to know about the new life of Sue Bridehead. One day, he sent Arabella to Marygreen

to collect some information about her. When she turned up in the evening, she imparted the heart-pinching news of her marriage to him. She further said: "She (Sue) burnt her best embriodery that she'd worn with you, to blot you out entirely." Jude went to a public-house to mitigate his pangs with the help of liquor. Arabella went out in his search. A shrewd guess as to his probable course took her straight to the tavern which Jude had formerly frequented, and where she had been barmaid for a brief term. She had no sooner opened the door of the 'Private Bar' than her eyes fell upon him ——— who was strongly intoxicated. Arabella took him to her father's house.

VII

Arabella wanted to re-marry Jude; but, at the sametime, she was also aware of his profound love for Sue Bridehead. The situation needed a careful manipulation. Arabella decided to keep him in her father's house till marriage. And one day she actually enticed him into her snare. They married again. But Jude was not mentally adjusted to the new situation.

VIII

Jude and Arabella, who had lived but a short time in her father's house after their marriage, shifted to a lodging on the top floor of a dwelling nearer to the centre of the city. Jude was still invalid; his health was deteriorating rapidly. One day he asked Arabella to write to Sue Bridehead; he wanted to see her once again. She agreed, after much procrastination, to comply with his request. But, as a matter of fact, she did not post any letter to Sue.

Jude awaited the visit of Sue; but she did not turn up. At last he himself went to pay her last visit at Marygreen. Sue did meet him, but only to accentuate his agonies, When he returned to Christminster, he was much depressed.

IX

Jude alighted at the Christminster platform. The rain of the afternoon showed no sign of abatement. The water

ran out of his clothes as he walked, and he was compelled to lean against the wall to support himself while coughing. Arabella met him on the platform, and took him to the house. He scolded her severely for not writing to Sue. Arabella, however, did not give any response.

X

Jude's health was very weak; he was not in a position to undertake any heavy work. He usually remained in his room. One day he received a surprise. Mrs. Edlin came to see him, quite on her own account. Jude's wife, whose feelings as to where his affections were centred had reached absolute indifference by this time, went out, leaving the old woman alone with Jude. Mr. Phillotson and Sue Bridehead, Mrs. Edlin told, were living together as husband and wife. Their married-life seemed to be successful. Jude felt a terrible shock. As he reflected more and more on the news, and grew more restless, he began in his mental agony to use profane language about social conventions, which started a fit of coughing. Mr. Edlin went out of the room.

XI

His (Jude's) face was now so thin that his friends would hardly have known him. It was afternoon, and Arabella was at the looking-glass curling her hair, which operation she performed by heating an umbrella-stay in the flame of a candle she had lighted, and using it upon the flowing lock. When she had finished this, practised a dimple, and put on her things. She cast her eyes upon Jude. He was dead. Certain sounds from without revealed that the town was in festivity. They made her restless, and, at last, she went out to participate in the colourful and gay life of the town.

Principal Characters Of The Novel

Jude Fawley

Jude Fawley is the protagonist of the novel. He is, in fact, the entire novel. The novel rotates round his personality, and depicts the tragic vicissitudes of his life.

Jude is a young man with a forcible, meditative, and earnest rather than handsome cast of countenance. He has black, curly hair. He is of dark complexion, with dark harmonizing eyes, and he wears a closely trimmed black beard of more advanced growth than is usual at his age. This is the physiognomy of our tragic hero.

He is a hard working and diligent fellow. As a boy, he endeavours to make his presence tolerable to his crusty, maiden aunt by assisting her to the best of his ability, and the business of the little cottage bakery grows in consequence. Even when he becomes a stone-mason, his interest in the work is not abated.

His exterior seems to be hard, but he has a tender heart, which is replete with love and kind passions. "He was a boy who could not himself bear to hurt anything. He had never brought home a nest of young birds without lying awake in misery half the night after, and often reinstating them and the nest in their original place the next morning. He could scarcely bear to see trees cut down or lopped, from a fancy that it hurt them ; and late pruning, when the sap was up and the trees bled profusely, had been a positive grief to him in his infancy".

When he hesitates to slaughter the pig, his wife is offended with him. "Don't be such a tender-hearted fool" ! is the remark of his wife ; and perhaps he is one.

He has a profound and insatiable passion for knowledge. "The boy is crazy for books," says his aunt. The remark seems to be a valid one. He writes to the schoolmaster for grammar books. When he receives the books, he reads them with keen interest. He has deep love and reverence for Christminster——the city of scholars. "The heavenly Jerusalem !" "It is a city of light." "The tree of knowledge grows there." "It is a place that teachers of men spring from and go to." These are his remarks about Christminster, to which he is romantically attached.

But Jude has a tragic flaw, which mars his intellectual aspirations. He himself says : "I have the germs of every human infirmity in me." He is highly sensual, and can't resist the temptation of flesh. He is a "ridiculously affectionate fellow." He falls in love with Arabella Donn—— 'a mere female animal'. He, later on, marries the girl. But the marriage proves to be a failure because "it was based on a temporary feeling which had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a life-long commeradeship tolerable." Then he is entangled in a love-affair with his married cousin, Sue Bridehead. She deserts her legal husband, and comes to live with him (Jude). They lead an immoral and incestuous life. After some time, she realizes her mistake, and goes back to her former husband. Jude is left all alone. He perceives with despondency that, taken all round, he is a man of too many passions to make a good clergyman ; the utmost he can hope for is that in a life of constant internal warfare between flesh and spirit the former may not be always victorious.

Jude's end is very pathetic. When Sue Bridehead goes back to her legal husband (Phillotson), he feels dejected and depressed. His health deteriorates. He takes to drink, and ultimately dies in a deplorable condition.

Sue Bridehead

Sue Bridehead is the cousin of Jude Fawley. She works an ecclesiastical designer at Christminster. She is a country girl at bottom, her life in the city has taken all rawness and rusticity out of her. She lacks the heroic fortitude of Tess ; she has not the physical vigour of Bathsheba. But, like Eutacia, she is romantic and imaginative. She thinks that 'the world is a stanza or melody composed in a dream.' She is a cultered girl, having refined sensibilities. When Jude comes to Christminster, he happens to meet her. They soon develop an intimate friendship.

Sue Bridehead is a girl of liberal views. One day, she purchases the plaster statues of Cupid and Venus. Her partner, Miss Fontover, can't tolerate the sight of pagan deities, and breaks them. Sue is annoyed with her partner, and gives up the work of designer. However, she gets employment as a pupil-teacher in the school of Mr. Phillotson. Later on, she marries him. But this marriage is the result of Sue's immature thinking. She herself acknowledges : "Before I married him I had never thought out fully what marriage meant." The age difference renders their marriage unsuccessful. She say : "I like Mr. Phillotson as a friend, I don't like him——it is a torture to me to——live with him as a husband." Consequently, she deserts her husband and flies to Jude. She is at liberty to contract a second marriage ; but she, consciously or un-consciously, avoid this step. She lives with Jude as his un-married wife, and becomes the mother of two children.

But unfortunately, the children perish by a tragic fate. This episode brings about a change in Sue's views ; her attitudes are to a great extent, modified. Now she realizes, for the first time in her life, the irrationality of her conduct. She says to Jude : "We have been selfish, careless, even impious, in our courses, you and I. Our

life has been a vain attempt at self-delight. But self-abnegation is the higher road. We should mortify the flesh ——— the terrible flesh ——— the curse of Adam! self-renunciation ——— that's thing"! These words are the result of an acute introspection. Now, she has been purged of her impurities. She feels that sensuous pleasure is not the ultimate object of life. Her belief that life resembles a stanza or melody composed in a dream, is shattered to fragments. She feels more and more convinced as time goes on that she belongs to Phillotson, or to nobody. Eventually she goes back to him, and re-marries him. She says to Mr. Phillotson: "My children are dead. They were sin-beggotten. They were sacrified to teach me how to live! ——— their death was the first stage of my purification. That's why they have not died in vain"!. These lines indicate that her character is not static; it is dynamic. Sue has so passed through the trial and tribulations of life, and so received their impressions that they have purified her.

Mr. Phillotson

Mr. Phillotson is a middle-aged man. He is, by profession, a school-master. His face is old-fashioned and unhealthy-looking; but a certain gentlemanliness has been imparted to it, by nature. His speech is a little slow, but his tones are sincere enough to make his hesitation no defect. There are four lines across his forehead, and he only wears spectacles when reading at night.

His scheme is to be a university graduated, and then to be ordained. But his ambition remains unfulfilled, and he does not succeed in his purpose. He continues his life as a schoolmaster.

He is deeply in love with Sue Bridehead, a beautiful young girl, who is employed in his school as a pupil-teacher. He reads her letters musingly. He, then, takes her photograph from the drawer and kisses it with all the

passionateness of a young man of eighteen. He repeats this process almost daily. Essentially an unpractical man, he save money for a practical purpose ——— that of keeping a wife, who, if she chooses, may conduct one of the girl's school adjoining his own.

But he has a drawback in his character ; it result from his intense love for Sue Bridehead. He entices her to marry him. He himself says : "She was a pupil teacher under me........., and I took advantage of her inexperience, and told her out for walks, and got her to agree to a long engagement before she well know her own mind. Afterwards she saw somebody else, but she blindly fulfilled her engagement". But this drawback is not a serious one. He has a supreme virtue, namely self-sacrifice. When Sue Bridehead leaves him, he make no objection. After her departure, he however, feels dejected. He wriggles in spiritual agonies and mental tortures. When she return to him, he forgives her. This act indicates his large-heartedness.

Arabella Donn

Arabella Donn is a fine dark-eyed girl. She has a round and prominent bosom, full lips, perfects teeth, and the rich complexion of a Cochin hen's egg. She is a complete and substantial female animal ——— no more, no less. She is not extraordinarily beautiful she has sexual appeal. Unlike Sue Bridehead, she is not a cultured girl. On the contrary, her coarseness touches the border of vulgarity. She wears false hair, and produces artificial dimples in her cheeks.

Jude is entangled in a love-affair with her. When he sees her, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seizes hold of him ——— "something which had nothing in common with spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto". He, later on, marries her. But the marriage turns out to be a failure. The main reason being the

difference of temperaments. Arabella deserts Jude, and goes to Australia with her parents. She contracts a second marriage. The business of her parents does not flourish according to their expectations. She comes back to England, and works as a barmaid. When Sue Bridehead leaves Jude alone, she re-marries him.

Arabella is a callous and stone-hearted woman. When Jude in seriously ill, he wants to have a last glimpse of Sue. He asks Arabella to write to her. But she does not comply with his request. When he dies, she feel no remorse, and goes out to enjoy the gay and glorious life of the city.

Introduction to The Return of the Native

Brief Summary of the Novel

The Return of the Native' is the most pagan of Hardy's works———'a revolt', Evelyn Hardy called it, 'against ascetism and so-called christian morality.' The scene is the Sombre Egdon Health, typical of the country near Warehem in Dorest. Damon Wildeve, engineer turned publican, after playing fast and loose with two women by whom he is loved———the gentle, unselfish Thomasin Yeobright, and the selfish, capracious Eustacia Vye———marries the former in spite of the latter ; while Thomasin rejects her humbler adorer, the reddleman, Diggory Venn. Her cousin, clym Yeobright, a diamond merchant in Paris, disgusted with the vanity and uselessness of his occupation, returns to Egdon with the intention of becoming a school-master in his native country. He falls in love with Eustacia, who finding in Clym a finer likeness to her ideal lover and hero, has given over Wildeve, and fallen in real love with his successor. They marry : Mrs. Yeobright and her son having bitter reproach, one against the other. She in no way sanctions the marriage ; and early attempts at reconciliation are frustrated by misunder standings. Clym, finding his eye-sight failing him, takes to furze-cutting like a labourer for his living ; he occupies a small cottage with Eustacia who learns to repent her marriage which has brought no realization of her vague hopes for some splendid scene of life and to renew her old capricious relations with Wildeve who promises her to bring her in Paris. Venn

Thomasin's lover moves about the district, alert to discover anything that nearly concerns her; through his agency much of the drama is developed. Mrs. Yeobright at last relents in love for her only son and sets out to visit him and his wife, upon a day of intense heat. Clym tired with labour is asleep in his room; his wife Eustacia, and his cousin's husband Wildeve, are discussing affairs, while he sleeps. Eustacia sees Mrs. Yeobright at the door, their eyes meet but Eustacia does not open the door. The mother knocks again: it seems to rouse Clym. Thinking that Clym will open the door, Eustacia dismisses Wildeve by another way: coming back she still finds Clym sleeping, and his mother gone. She does not tell Clym. Mrs. Yeobright, worn out with suffering and physical weakness, is found by Clym, after his going out, at the point of death upon her way home. He accuses himself of killing his mother and falls into a fever. Upon recovery, he learns from casual talk with the folk of the place and from an explanation of certain words, spoken by his mother to a small boy upon the heath as she lays down to die, that Eustacia had seen her, had not opened the door to her, and had been with a man at that time. He upbraids her violently and wildly she leave him and returns to her father's house. This and the discovery that Eustacia's relations with Wildeve have not ceased, leads to separation between the husband and wife and to Eustacia's flight with Wildeve, in the course of which both are drowned. Clym, attributing to himself some responsibility for the death of his mother and wife, becomes an itinerant preacher. Thomasin marries Diggory Venn.

Critical Appreciation of the Novel

"The Return of the Native" is now acknowledged to be the finest work of Hardy's middle age and one of the prose master-pieces of English language. Walter Allen says: "If any single novel may be taken as the key to Hardy's mind and art it is probably 'The Return of the Native', his sixth book, published in 1878. A tragic love story, like almost all his fiction, it is extremely simple in plot. Clym Yeobright, who has been a diamond merchant in Paris, comes home to serve his fellow men as teacher and preacher. He falls in love with and marries Eustacia Vye, who has had a secret love affair with Damon Wildeve, the husband of Clym's cousin, Thomasin. Eustacia a Wildeve resume their affair and, after their death by drowning, Thomasin marries Diggory Venn, the travelling reddle-man, who has throughout brooded over the action of the novel like a guardian but not always effectual angel. The significant characters are Clym and Eustacia. Clym is the first of Hardy's idealists, the first of what have been called his 'Prig heroes', a man conscious all the time of what Hardy himself called 'the ache of moderniem'. In a sense, he represents Hardy's own values. Clym, then, is Hardy's modern man; Eustacia, however, is not his modern woman: she is woman as he most characteristically sees her. She has her affinities with Flauberts Emma Bovary. She is a born romantic, at odds with her environment:

> "To be loved to madness———such was her great desire. Love was to her the cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abtraction called

> passionate love more than for any particular lover".

But Hardy's depiction of her is very different from Flaubert's of Emma. Emma is revealed with cruel exactitude, exposed with the clinical remorselessness of a case-history. Eustacia is magnified into a splendid romantic figure. E. M. Forster says in Aspects of the Novel that Hardy 'conceives his novels from an enormous height'. He conceives his great novels the same height ; in the case of Clym by making him a representative of what he considered modern man———and the man of the future ———in his most essential qualities ; in the case of Eustacia by a richly romantic view of her. There is no implied criticism of her attitudes, such as is felt throughout in Flauberth's rendering of Emma. One thing, however, is clear : the woman so described could not possibly be a fit wife for the single-minded idealist who 'had a conviction that want of most men was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence', and who, wishing 'to raise the class at the expense of the individuals rather than the individuals at the expense of the class', 'was ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed'. And indeed Eustacia marries Clym because she cannot believe that he will return to Paris, taking her with him ; when his eyesight fails as a result of his studies and he takes of furzed-cutting rather than endure idleness, she again becomes Wildeve's mistress, as she was before her marriage".

"But' as The Return of the Native further shows, there is another way is which Hardy conceives his Novels and their tragic characters from an enormous height. The anthologists of English prose have done him no service by snipping off from the book the description of Egdon Heath with which it opens and isolating it as a purple passage. The heath is not just so much scenic backcloth to the action, it is all pervasive, without it, the Novel would be animaginable, for the heath provides it with the especial dimension in which it has its being. The heath holds the action of the novel and its characters as

though in the hollow of the hand. It does not matter in the least that, living on Egdon, Eustacia dreams of Paris : that is part of her tragic desting. The function of heath in the novel is to describe, as carefully and throughly as Hardy can, the real circumstances in which man lives. What the individual may feel about those circumstances is irrelevant, for he does not thereby escape them. The heath, one might say, is an extended image of nature of which man is part, in which he is caught, which conditions his very being, and which cares nothing for him. His life in relation to it is ephemeral as the bonfires the peasants make of the heath furze".

"This ephemerality of man, the insignificance of his being, is brought out time and again in 'The Return of the Native', generally by reference to the brooding permanence of the vast heath. 'This obscure, obsolete, superseded country' is the world of nature under the aspect of time, time geological and historical alike. Men has scarcely scratches its surface. It has its own life, which is man's only when he is content to be lowly and unassuming like the furze-cutters who live off it. Hardy shows us the heath through all seasons, of year and over immeasurably greater stretches of time. This secret life of the heath Hardy describes again and again, with all the powers of eye and ear for nature in which he is unrivelled among our Novelists".

'The Return of the Native' was the first Novel in which he achieved tbe tragic level, and it could be argued that it is his finest. In no other does the setting of the natural world so dominate the characters. Perhaps the dichotomy between the human being and the nature in which he lives is too acute in this book ; in the tragic works that follow, one has the feeling that the tragic heroes and heroines more and more take nature into themselves, and to this extent the importance of the natural setting as something apart from man diminishes".

Neill has remarked in 'A Short History of the English Novel': "The Return of the Native, which added considerably to his growing reputation, clearly shows Hardy's increasing tendency to despair. Egdon Heath itself becomes symbolic of the doom of man. The description of the heath is loaded with philosophy inspired by its sombre, elemental grandeur, the gloomy vastness in which every living thing seems to be swallowed up in the depth of centuries. However, the grim sense of tragedy and frustration in the Novel is relieved by the ultimate happiness of Thomasin, who marries the honest, loyal reddle-man, Diggory Venn."

Plot Construction of the Novel

Hardy has been universally praised for his coherent any systematic plots. 'The Return of The Native' is an another illustration of his consummate skill in plot construction. The main plot is the story of Clym, who had opportunities for material advancement, and would not take them. His return to Egdon Heath wrecks the lives of others, since he will not accept the standards values of his friends, but insists on following his own ideas. There are two sub-plots; one is the courtship of Venn and Thomasin, and the other is the intrigue which is carried on by Wildeve and Eustacia. Hardy blends these plots with perfect skill and attains the unity of effect. There is no superficial character or event; every detail plays a vital role in the furtherance of the plot. The flow of the Novel is regular and smooth. Having depicted the Egdon Heath with the brush of a seer, Hardy introduces his human characters, in the same pictorial way; they are visualized as objects in the landscape till they make themselves known an animate beings. So Hardy's pen works: to tell what happens and how, he depicts the look and gesture of the doer. And his scenery is not scenery in the ordinary sense, not decoration in purple patches, not mere background, but an integral part of the drama. All is made visible, the landscape and the life going upon it. And there is no shock in the passage from description to narrative. His pictures of external nature expound the same philosophy, and are a piece with the story; they have precisely the same meaning. In 'The Return of the Native' Hardy attempted to observe the three classical unities of time, place and action, as recommended by Aristotle: This was in keeping with his love of fitness and proportion as an architect."

Chapter-wise Summary of the Novel

BOOK FIRST

The Three Women

I

Egdon Heath was a place perfectly accordant with man's nature———neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have long lived apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities. Egdon Heath was not subject to any change. Civilization was its enemy; and ever since the beginning of vegetation its soil had worn the same antique brown dress, the natural and invariable garment of the particular formation. In it venerable one coat lay a certain vein of satire on human vanity in clothes. Egdon Heath remained unchanged. Its surfaces were neither so steep as to be destructable by weather, nor so flat as to be the victims of floods and deposits. With the exception of an aged highway, and a still more aged barrow———themselves almost crystallized to natural products by long continuance———even the trifling irregalarities were not caused by plough, or spade, but remained as the very finger-touches of the last geological change.

II

An old man was walking along the road. He was white-headed as a mountain, bowed in the shoulders, and faded in general aspect. He wore a glazed hat, an ancient boat-cloak, and shoes ; his brass buttons bearing an anchor upon their faces. He seemed to be a retired naval officer.

The old man frequently stretched his eyes ahead to gaze over the tract that he had yet to traverse. At length he discerned, a long distance in front of him, a moving spot, which appeared to be a vehicle, and it proved to be going the same way as that in which he himself was journeying. The traveller with the cart was a reddle-man———a person whose vocation it was to supply farmers with redding for their sheep. The decayed officer, by degrees, came up alongside his fellow-wayfarer and wished him good evening. The reddle-man turned his head, and replied in sad and occupied tones. After replying to the old man's greeting he showed no inclination to continue in talk, although they still walked side by side, for the elder traveller seemed to desire company. As they thus pursued their way, the reddleman occasionally left his companion's side, and, stepping behind the van, looked into its interior through a small window. The look was always anxious. Suddenly a faint cry sounded from the interior ; the reddle-man hastened to the back, looked in, and came away again. He told the naval officer about the presence of a woman in the van; but he did not give any further information about her. His ponies were also tired, and he wanted to take some rest. So the reddle-man turned his horses and van in upon the turf. He then took some hay from a truss which was slung up under the van, and, throwing a portion of it in front of the horses, made a pad of the rest, which he laid on the ground beside his vehicle. Upon this he sat down, leaning his back against the wheel.

III

Many persons of the neighbouring hamlets gathered in the immediate vicinity of the barrow. They made a

huge pyramid of furze and set it on fire. Then, they started dancing and singing. This merriment was an indication of their carefree soul. The reddle-man, also came there, and asked them about the way, leading to Mrs. Yeobrights' house. After receiving the necessary information, he went away. The reddle-man had not been gone more than a few minutes when another person approached the partially revived bonfire. It proved to be a well-known and respected widow of the neighbourhood. She was a woman of middle-age, with well-formed features of the type usually found where perspicacity is the chief quality enthroned within. She chatted frankly with the persons, who told her about the reddle-man. After a brief talk, she took her way towards her niece's house.

IV

Mrs. Yeobright reached the high-way. When she was about to enter the inn, she saw a horse and vehicle some two hundred yards beyond it, coming towards her, a man walking alongside with a lantern in his hand. It was soon evident that this was the reddle-man who had inquired for her. Instead of entering the inn at once, she walked by it and towards the van. The conveyance came close, and the man was about to pass her with little notice, when she turned to him and said, 'I think you have been inquiring for me? I am Mrs. Yeobright of Blooms—End.' The reddle-man started, and held up his finger. He stopped the horses, and beckoned to her to withdraw with him a few yards aside, which she did, wondering. He informed her about the presence of her niece, Miss Thomasin, in the van. Mrs. Yeobright hastened towards the van. The reddle-man followed with the lantern, and, stepping up first, assisted her to mount beside him. On the door being opened she perceived at the end of the van an extemporized couch, around which was hung apparently all the drapery that the reddle-man possessed, to keep the occupant of the little couch from contact with the red materials of his trade. A young girl lay thereon, covered with a cloak. She was asleep, and

the light of the lantern fell upon her features. She was awakened from her slumber. She asked the reddle-man to stop the horses. The man regarded her with tender reluctance, but stopped them. Aunt and niece then descended from the van. They expressed their deep gratitude for the assistance of the reddle-man. And after a vew further words they parted, the reddle-man moving onwards with his van, and the two women remaining standing in the road.

V

Miss Thomasin informed her aunt that her marriage with Mr. Wildeve could not take place because of some trifling irregularity in the licence. It being dark, Thomasin allowed her emotion to escape her by the silent way of tears, which could roll down her cheek unseen. They decided to call on Mr. Wildeve, and turned towards the inn. Mrs. Yeobright tapped at the door of the private parlour, unfastened it, and looked in. The back and shoulders of man came between her eyes and the fire. Wildeve, whose form it was, immediately turned, arose, and advanced to meet his visitors. Mrs. Yeobright scolded him severely. He also replied in a harsh tone, but Miss Thomasin pacified him. In the meantime, band-men came there to congratulate the newly married couple. Mrs. Yeobright wanted to leave the house immediately, but Mr. Wildeve persuaded her to remain inside. He himself went out to face the situation. During his absence, aunt and niece made good their escape through the back-window.

VI

When the whole Egdon Heath concourse had left the site of bonfire to its accustomed loneliness, a closely wrapped female figure approached the barrow from that quarter of the heath in which the little fire lay. She was Eustacia. She lifted her left hand, which held a closed telescope. This she rapidly extended, as if she were well accustomed to the operation, and raising it to her

eye directed it towards the light beaming from the inn. At last she gave up her spying attitude, closed the telescope and turned to the decaying embers. She was walking to and fro ; her mood betrayed her mental restlessness. Eventually, Wildeve come there. She upbraided him severely for his delay. He also uttered some harsh remarks in retaliation. She returned no answer, and with the bow of dancing master Wildeve vanished out of sight.

VII

Eustacia Vye was the saw material of divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She has the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman. She was in person full-limbed and somewhat heavy ; without ruddiness, as without pallor, and soft to the touch as a cloud. To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow : it closed over her forehead like night fall extinguishing the western glow. To be loved to madness ————such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover. She often repeated her prayers ; not at particular times, but, like the unaffected devout, when she desired to pray. Her prayer was always spontaneous, and often ran thus, 'O deliver may heart from this fearful gloom and loneliness: send me great love from somewhere, else I shall die'.

VIII

The boy who lighted bonfire for Eustacia, was running towards his home. He ran until he was out of breath, and then, becoming more courageous, walked leisurely along, singining in an old voice a little song about a sailor-boy and a fair one, and bright gold in store. In the middle of this the child stopped : from a pit under the hill ahead of him shone a light, whence proceeded a cloud of floating dust and a smacking voice. The

boy was frightened. He turned back instead of passing the light, with a view of asking Miss Eustacia Vye to let her servant accompany him home. When the boy had reascended to the top of the valley he found the fire to be still burning on the bank, though lower than before. Beside it, instead of Eustacia's solitary form, he saw two persons, the second being a man. He did not think it advisable to interrupt her conversation with Wildeve, and withdrew silently. With a heavy sigh he retraced the slope, and followed the path he has followed before. The light had gone, the rising dust had disappeared———he hoped for ever. He marched resolutely along, and found nothing to alarm him. He came across a reddle-man, who was beating out his bag. The boy told him about the conversation which took place between Eustacia and Wildeve. He, then, proceeded in his direction.

IX

The reddleman lived like a gipsy; but gipsies he scorned. He was about as thriving as travelling basket and mat makers; but he had nothing to do with them. He was more decently born and brought up than the cattle-drovers who passed and repassed him in his wanderings; but they merely nodded to him. His occupation tended to isolate him, and isolated he was mostly seen to be. When the boy was gone, he drew a letter from a brownpaper packet. The letter bore a date some two years previous to that time, and was signed 'Thomasin Yeobright.' Since the arrival of that letter, on a certain autumn morning long ago, the reddleman and Thomasin had not met. But the reddleman was fully aware of the situation, and he decided to render help to Thomasin.

X

The reddleman made up his mind to call on Eustacia Vye. When he met her, he implored her not to be a clog in the way of Thomasin. On the other hand, he asked her to exercise her influence on Wildeve, and persuade him to marry Thomasin. But Eustacia rejected her request on the

plea that she had no hold on Wildeve. The reddleman spoke not another word. With his hands behind him he turned away, that she might not see the hopeless disappointment in his face.

XI

The reddleman had left Eustacia's presence with desponding views on Thomasin's future happiness: but he was awakened to the fact that one other channel remained untried by seeing, as he followed the way to his van, the form of Mrs. Yeobright. He went across to her; and could almost perceive in her anxious face that this journey of hero to Wildeve was undertaken with the same object as his own to Eustacia. He talked with Mrs. Yeobright and expressed his willingness to marry Thomasin. She thanked him for his interest in his niece; but, at the same time, she hinted about her profound devotion to Wildeve. And she went on. Though this conversation did not divert Thomasin's aunt from her purposed interview with Wildeve, it made a considerable difference in her mode of conducting that interview. She thanked God for the weapon which the reddleman put into her hands. She asked him to be fair with Thomasin. She further told him that another man was interested in marriage with her. Wildeve promised to inform her of his decision shortly. And the interview then terminated, Mrs. Yeobright returning homeward as she had come.

Wildeve met Eustacia, and informed her of the new situation. He, then, put before her the proposal of elopement. But Eustacia avoided any over-hasty decision and promised to consider the question in cool moments.

BOOK SECOND

The Arrival

I

Eustacia came to know that Clym Yeobright was

returning home to spend Christmas with his mother. All the people of the locality were talking about it, as if it were a matter of national importance. Eustacia was lulling her imagination with the thoughts of a young man who was returning from the French capital———the centre and vortex of the fashionable world. She began to cherish sweet thoughts for him.

II

Thomasin and her aunt were making preparations for the welcome of Clym Yeobright. Thomasin selected the best and largest apples from the store, and then went out with Mrs. Yeobright to pick up berries. She requested her not to disclose the sad incident of marriage to Clym Yeobright. Her aunt nodded in consent. Thomasin came out of the tree, shook from her hair and dress the loose berries which had fallen thereon, and went down the hill with her aunt, each woman bearing half the gathered boughs. When the west grew red the two relatives came again from the house and plunged into the heath in a different direction from the first, towards a point in the distant highway along which the expected man was to return.

III

Eustacia stood just within the heath, straining her eyes in the direction of Mrs. Yeobright's house and premises. No light, sound, or movement was perceptible there. The evening was chilly; the spot was dark and lonely. She inferred that the guest had not yet come; and after lingering ten or fifteen minutes she turned again towards home.

She had not far retraced her steps when sounds in front of her betokened the approach of persons in conversation along the same path. Soon their heads became visible against the sky. They were walking slowly; and though it was too dark for much discovery cf character from aspect, the gait of them showed that they were not workers on the heath. Eustacia stepped a little out of the foot-track to let

them pass. They were two women and a man, and the voices of the women were those of Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin. They went by her, and at the moment of passing appeared to discern her dusky form. There came to her ears in a masculine voice, 'Good Night!' With the departure of the figures the profuse articulations of the women wasted away from her memory; but the accents of the other stayed on. That night was an eventful one to Eustacia's brain, she dreamt beautiful dreams.

IV

The mummers selected Captain Vye's fuel-house as the rehearsal-room; the reason being that his dwelling was nearly in the centre of the heath. The lads who formed the company of players lived at different scattered points around, and by meeting in this spot the distances to be traversed by all the corners would be about equally proportioned. Eustacia viewed the entire scene through a rough hole in the wall. A boy, Charley, played the role of the Turkish Knight. She appreciated his performance very much. When the rehearsal was over, she called him into the house. She told him that she wanted to play the role of the Turkish Knight in his place. He agreed to comply with her desire, provided she allowed him to hold her hand for half an hour. Eustacia accepted the condition. The next evening, she stood at the fuelhouse door, waiting for the dusk which was the bring Charley with the trapping. At last he came with the articles. He placed them on the threshold and held her hand with warm affection.

V

The next evening the mummers were assembled in the same spot, awaiting the enterance of the Turkish Knight, Eustacia watched the assemblage through the hole; and seeing that now was the proper time to enter, she went from the 'linhay' and boldly pulled the bobbin of the fuel-house door.

'Here's Charley at last! How late you be, Charley.'

'''Tis not Charley,' said the Turkish Knight from within his visor. ''This a cousin of Miss Vyes', come to take Charley's place from curiosity. I know the part as well as he.'

The play was hastily rehearsed, whereupon the other mummers were delighted with the new Knight. The extinguished the candles at half-past eight, and set out upon the heath in the direction of Mrs. Yeobrights' house at Blooms-End. Half an hour of walking and talking brought them to their destination. As they drew nearer to the front of the house the mummers became aware that music and dancing were briskly flourishing within. At last, they were admitted into the house. Eustacia played her part very well. When her part was over, she sat down quietly and surveyed the room.

VI

The mummers were preparing to leave ; but Mrs. Yeobright stopped them by asking them to sit down and have a little supper. The mummers doffed their helmets, and began to eat and drink. Eustacia was happy in the opportunity of staying a little longer. Clym Yeobright. was doing the waiting. Conflicting sensations of love, fear and shame reduced Eustacia to a state of the utmost uneasiness. To escape was her great and immediate desire. The other mummers appeared to be in no hurry to leave; and murmuring to the lad who sat next to her that she preferred waiting for them outside the house, she moved to the door as imperceptibly as possible, opened it, and slipped out, Clym followed her. But Eustacia refused to disclose her identity and moved towards her house.

VII

Next day, Eustacia went out for a stroll. She was about half a mile from her residence when she beheld a sinister redness arising from a ravine a little way in advance; she guessed it to signify Diggory Venn———the reddleman. He paid her the compliments, which she accepted

with a brief smile. She told him that she did not want to stand in the way of Thomasins' marriage with Wildeve. She further expressed her intention to hold no communication with him. Diggory Venn was much astonished at these remarks. Eustacia gave him a letter for Wildeve. Venn conveyed the letter to him. The letter exercised a decisive influence on the future pattern of affairs. Wildeve obtained Thomasin's consent to marriage; and Venn was again hurled into despair.

VIII

The marriage of Thomasin with Wildeve was conducted in the absence of Clym Yeobright, who had gone on a few day's visit to a friend about ten miles off. The marriage ceremony was a simple one. Venn came to Mrs. Yeobright and broke the news of successful marriage. From that instant of leaving her door, the reddleman was seen no more in or about Heath for a space of many months.

BOOK THIRD

The Fascination

1

Clym Yeobright had a scholarly personality. The observer's eye was arrested, not by his face as a picture, but by his face as a page; not by what it was, but by what it recorded. The fact was that Yeobright's fame had spread to an awkward extent before he left home. It is bad when your fame outruns your means, said the Spanish Jesuit Gracian. At the age of six he had asked a Scripture" riddle: "Who was the first man known to wear breeches? and applause had resounded from every verge of the heath. At seven he painted the Battle of Waterloo with tiger-lily pollen and blackcurrant juice, in the absence of water-colours. By the time he reached twelve he had in this manner been heard of as artist and scholar for at least two

miles around. Possibly Clym's fame, like Homer's, owed something to the accidents of his situation; nevertheless famous he was

II

Clym Yeobright told his mother that he had no intention of going back to Paris. He intention was to become a schoolmaster of the ignorant people, living at heath. His mother was much astonished at the new situation. She told her son in clear terms that his fancies would bring about his ruin; but he paid no heed to her warnings.

III

The afternoon was fine, and Yeobright walked on the heath for an hour with his mother. When they reached the lofty ridge which divided the valley of Blooms-End from the adjoining valley they stood still and looked around. The Quiet Woman Inn was visible on the low margin of the heath in one direction. Mrs. Yeobright went to see Thomasin, while Clym proceeded in the direction of Mistover. He wanted to help the workers in getting the bucket out of the captain's well. Clym began to pull the rope out of the well. 'Tie a rope round him——it is dangerous!' cried a soft and anxious voice somewhere above them. Everybody turned. The speaker was a woman, gazing down upon the group from an upper window. Eustacia, who had reddened when she perceived the effect of her exclamation upon the group below, was no longer to be seen at the window.

When the workmen retired, Clym met Eustacia. The meeting was a brief one; but it exerted deep influence on him. Consequently, their meetings became frequent. When Mrs. Yeobright came to know of these meetings, she scolded him severely. Their relations suffered a set-back.

IV

The next day was gloomy enough at Bloom-End. Yeobright remained in his study, sitting over the open

books. With the resolve to keep up a show of conversation he said, about seven o' clock in the evening, 'There's an eclipse of the moon to-night. I am going out to see it.' And, putting on his overcoat, he left his mother. The low moon was not as yet visible from the front of the house, and Yeobright climbed out of the valley until he stood in the fall flood of her light. But even now he walked on, and his steps were in the direction of Rainbarrow. In half an hour he stood at the top. The sky was clear from verge to verge, and the moon flung her rays over the whole heath. While he watched the far-removed landscape a tawny stain grew into being on the lower verge; the eclipse had begun. The shadowed on the moon perceptibly widened. He heard a rustling on his left hand, a cloaked figure with an upturned face appeared at the base of the Barrow, and Clym descended. In a moment the figure was in his arms, and his lips upon hers. At last they spoke. Clym was expressing his passionate love, but Eustacia was asking questions about Paris and its fashionable life. The attitudes of two loving souls were remarkably different.

V

When Yeobright was not with Eustacia he was sitting slavishly over his books; when he was not reading he was meeting her. These meetings were carried on with the greatest secrecy. One afternoon his mother came from a morning visit to Thomasin. He could see from the disturbance in the lines of her face that something has happened. 'I have been told an incomprehensible thing, she said mournfully. 'The captain has let out at the Woman that you and Eustacia Vye are engaged to be married.' Yeobright confirmed the news. His mother flew into a rage. They exchanged bitter remarks. And he went out with tears in his eyes.

Clym Yeobright met Eustacia and informed her of the latest situation. And then they consulted on the question of marriage, and the day was chosen. It was to be a fortnight from that time.

VI

Next morning Clym departed from the house and again proceeded across the heath. A long day's march was before him, his object being to secure a dwelling to which he might take Eustacia when she became his wife. Such a house, small, secluded, and with its windows boarded up, he had casually observed a month earlier, about two miles beyond the village of East Egdon, and six miles distant altogether ; and thither he directed his steps today.

Yeobright reached the empty house about mid-day. It was almost as lonely as that of Eustacia's grandfather, but the fact that it stood near a heath was disguised by a belt of firs which almost enclosed the premises. He journeyed on about a mile further to the village in which the owner lived, and, returning with him to the house, arrangements were completed, and the man undertook that one room at least should be ready for occupation the next day. Clym's intention was to live there alone until Eustacia should join him on their wedding day.

He reached home damp and Weary enough after his ten-mile walk. The evening and the following morning were spent in concluding arrangements for departure. Next day, he left the house. No sooner had Yeobright gone from his mother's house than her face changed its rigid aspect for one of blank despair. It was great relief when, early in the afternoon, Thomasin paid her an unexpected visit. She told her aunt that she was in need of some money. Mrs. Yeobright decided to divide her entire wealth between Thomasin and Clym.

VII, VIII

The wedding morning came. Mrs. Yeobright, who had declined to attend the ceremony, sat by the breakfast table in the old room which communicated immediately with the porch, her eyes listlessly directed towards the open door. Towards evening Wildeve came. He told him that Thomasin had gone to attend the marriage ceremony. He

further said : "I believe you have something to give to Thomasin ? If you like, I will take it. Mrs. Yeobright hesitated, and wondered if Wildeve knew what the something was. She answered : "It is hardly necessary to send it. She can have it whenever she chooses to come. He went his way, his farewell being scarcely so courteous as his greeting.

Mrs. Yeobright went upstairs and took from a locked drawer a little box, out of which she poured a hoard of broad unworn guineas that had lain there many a year. They were a hundred in all, and she divided them into two heaps, fifty in each. Tying up these in small canvas bags, she went down to the garden and called to Christian Cantle. Mrs. Yeobright gave him the money bags, charged him to go to Mistover, and on no account to deliver them into any one's hand save her son's and Thomasin's Christian pocketed the money-bags, promised the greatest carefulness, and set out on his way. Unfortunately, he came across Wildeve. The two men sat on the grass and started gambling. Mr. Venn, the reddleman, was observing the game from behind a bush. Poor Christian lost all the guineas of Mrs. Yeobright and tottered away out of sight. At the same time, Venn appeared from behind a neighbouring bush and invited Wildeve to play with him. The invitation was accepted. But Fortune had fallen in love with the reddleman tonight. He won steadily, till he was the owner of the hundred guineas, which actually belonged to Mrs. Yeobright. Thomasin was crossing the heath in a van. Venn gave all the money to her, and returned empty-hand to his own van to take rest.

BOOK FOURTH

The Closed Door

I

Clym and Eustacia, in their little house at Alderworth, beyond East Edon, were living on with a monotony

which was delightfut to them. The heath and changes of weather were quite blotted out from their eyes for the present. They were enclosed in a sort of luminous mist, which hid from them surroundings of any inharmonious colour, and gave to all things the character of light. When it rained they were charmed because could remain indoors together all day with such a show of reason; when it was fine day they were charmed, because they could sit together on the hills. They are like those double stars which revolve round and round each other, and from a distance appear to be one.

Now, Eustacia's dream had always been that, once married to Clym, she would have the power of inducing him to return to Paris. Yet Yeobright was as firm in the contrary intention as if the tendency of marriage were rather to develop the fantasies of young philanthropy than to sweep them away.

Her anxiety reached a high pitch, but there was something in Clym's undeviating manner which made her hesitate before sounding him on the subject. At this point in their experience, however, an incident helped her. It arose entirely out of the unconscious misapplication by Venn of the fifty guineas intended for Yeobright.

A day or two after the receipt of the money Thomasin had sent a note to her aunt to thank her. Therefore, when a week or two had passed away, Mrs. Yeobright began to wonder why she never heard from her son of the receipt of the present; and to add gloom to her perplexity came the possibility that resentment might be the cause of his silence. She was in this state of uncertainty when she was informed one morning that her son's wife was visiting her grandfather at Mistover. She determined to walk up the hill, see Eustacia, and ascertain from her daughter-in-law's lips whether the family guineas had miscarried or not. When Christian learnt where she was going his concern reached its height. At the moment of her departure he could prevaricate no longer, and,

confessing to the gambling, told her the truth as far as he knew it———that the guineas had been won by Wildeve. Mrs. Yeobright met Eustacia and asked her about the guineas. She was totally unaware of the matter. So they exchanged bitter remarks. The excited mother returned home.

II

The result of that unpropitious interview was that Eustacia, instead of passing the afternoon with her grandfather, hastily returned home. She came indoors with her face flushed, and her eyes still showing traces of her recent excitement. She disclosed the entire situation to Clym, and remarked that she would never see his mother again. Next day the mystery of the guineas was explained. Thomasin paid them a hurried visit, and Clym's share was delivered up to him by her own hands. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Yeobright had already explained the whole matter to Thomasin.

One morning, after a severe strain than usual, Clym awoke with a strange sensation in his eyes. The sun was shining directly upon the window-blind, and at his first glance thitherward a sharp pain obliged him to close his eyelids quickly. At every new attempt to look about him the same morbid sensibility to light was manifested, and excoriating tears ran down his cheeks. Eustacia was thoroughly alarmed. On finding that the case was no better the next morning they decided to send for a Surgeon. Towards evening he arrived, and pronounced the disease to be acute inflammation induced by Clym's night studies. Yeobright learnt to his dismay that his eyes were in that peculiar state which, though affording him sight enough for walking about, would not admit of their being strained upon any definite object without incurring the risk of reproducing ophthalmia in its acute form. Thus he gave up his studies and become a furze cutter.

III

One day, Eustacia went to see a village picnic at East Egdon. The scene of picnic was a wonderful one. The dance was going on in the yellowish light of the moon. The farmers had formed a ring around the dancing couples. Eustacia could stand among these without a chance of being recognised. While she abstractedly watched them spinning and fluctuating in the increasing moonlight she suddenly heard her name whispered by a voice over her shoulder. Turning in surprise, she beheld at her elbow one whose presence instantly caused her to flush to the temples. It was Wildeve. Till this moment he had not met her eye since the morning of his marriage, when she had startled him by lifting her veil and coming forward to sign the register as witness. They moved aside, and talked about Clym's disease. Eustacia told him that her post-marriage life was far from being happy. Then they directed their steps towards the holly-bush, the point where they were to depart. Wildeve perceived Clym and Venn, who were coming from opposite direction. He left the way and concealed himself in the grass. That Venn's keen eyes had discovered what Yeobright's feeble vision had not———a man in the act of withdrawing from Eustacia's side———was within the limits of the probable. Clym returned back with Eustacia, and Venn proceeded in his own direction.

IV

One night Wildeve went towards the cottage of Eustacia. He advanced towards the window, which was no quite closed. He peeped into the room ; Eustacia was sitting there alone. Wildeve contemplated her for a minute, and then retreating into the heath beat the ferns lightly, whereupon moths flew out alarmed. Securing one, he returned to the window, and holding the moth to the chink, opened his hand. The moth made towards the candle upon Eustacia's table, hovered round it two or three times, and flew into the flame.

Eustacia started up. This had been a well-known signal in old times when Wildeve had used to come secretly wooing to Mistover. She at once knew that Wildeve was outside, but before she could consider what to do her husband came in from upstairs. Eustacia told him that she wanted to go out for a stroll. She arose, but before she had time to get out of the room a loud rapping began at the door. Clym opened the door, but found nobody outside.

Meanwhile a little drama had been acted outside which saved Eustacia from all possibility of compromising herself that evening at least. Whilst Wildeve had been preparing his moth-signal another person had come behind him up the gate. This man, who carried a gun in his hand, looked on for a moment at the other's operation by the window, walked up to the house, knocked at the door, and then vanished round the corner and over the hedge. This man was Venn.

Meanwhile Venn called upon Mrs. Yeobright, with whom he had been on friendly terms since she had learnt what a providential countermove he had made towards the restitution of the family quineas. He gave her a full account of Clym's affliction, and of the state in which he was living; then, referring to Thomasin, touched gently upon the apparent sadness of her days. He asked Mrs. Yeobright to patch up differences with her son and developed friendly relations with him. She agreed to act in accordance with his advice.

V

Next day Mrs. Yeobright started across the heath towards her son's house, to do her best in getting reconciled with him and Eustacia, in conformity with her words to the reddleman. She had never before been to her son's house, and its exact position was unknown to her. She tried one ascending path and another, and found that they led her astray. At last, she adopted the right course.

At one side of Clym's house was a knoll, and on the top of the knoll a clump of fir trees. On reaching this place Mrs. Yeobright felt weary and unwell. She ascended, and sat down under their shade to recover herself. From her elevated position the exhausted woman could perceive the house and its surrounding. She saw a man approaching the gate. His manner was peculiar, hesitating, and not that of a person come on business or by invitation. He surveyed the house with keen interest, and, then, went in.

VI

Wildeve, as has been stated, was determined to visit Eustacia boldly, by day and on the easy terms of a relation, since the reddleman had spied out and spoiled his walks to her by night. He went accordingly ; and it happened that the time of his arrival coincided with that of Mrs. Yeobright's pause on the hill near the house. When he was busy in talking Eustacia, a knock came to the door. She was somewhat puzzled. Wildeve ran out through the back door. Eustacia opened the door after the lapse of considerable time. But Mrs. Yeobright was gone.

VII

Clym Yeobright in the meantime had aroused himself from sleep. He told Eustacia that he intended to meet his mother. Misgiving, regret, fear, resolution, ran their swift course of expression in her dark eyes. She tried to detain her husband, but he was determined to go. And eventually he left her.

He came to a spot where a soft perfume was wafted across his path, and he stood still for a moment to inhale the familiar scent. It was the place at which, four hours earlier, his mother had sat down exhausted on the knoll covered with shepherd's thyme. While he stood a sound between a breathing and moan suddenly reached his ears. He moved a few steps in that direction, and now he perceived a recumbent figure almost close at his feet. But

he was not absolutely certain that the woman was his mother till he stooped and beheld her face, pallid, and with closed eyes. He lifted her up; then, at a slow pace, went onward with his load. While he was get nearly a mile from the house his mother exhibited signs of restlessness under the constraint of being borne along. The point they had now reached was not more than a mile from the blooms-End cottages occupied by persons well acquainted with Clym. He placed his mother in a disused cottage. Their friends also gathered there. They discovered that Mrs. Yeobright had been stung by a snake. They prepared an ointment with the fat of an adder and rubbed the wound with it.

VIII

In the meantime Eustacia, left alone in her cottage at Alderworth, had become considerably depressed by the posture of affairs. She decided to go out for a walk. When she reached the garden gate she heard wheels approaching, and looking round beheld her grandfather coming up in his car. He told her that Wildeve had come into a fortune of eleven thousand pounds after his uncle's death in Canada. The old man drove away. But Eustacia's thoughts were still revolving round eleven thousand pounds. Wildeve also came there. They set out for Blooms-End; their purpose was but a night-walk. Eustacia saw a flickering firelight proceeding from the open side of a hovel a little way before them. Wildeve went to the back wall of the hut. Presently Eustacia perceived that he was beckoning to her, and she advanced and joined him. They came to know that Mrs. Yeobright had died. Eustacia was greatly confused, and returned back to her cottage.

BOOK FIFTH

The Discovery

I

Clym Yeobright fell ill. At the same time, he felt

acute prick of conscience. He reproached himself as being the cause of his mother's death. He would ask Eustacia to agree with him in his self-condemnation; and when she, seared inwardly by a secret she dared not tell, declared that she could not give an opinion, he would say, "That's because you didn't know my mother's nature. She was always ready to forgive if asked to do so; but I seemed to her as an obstinate child, and that made her unyielding." Sometimes his condition had been one of utter remorse, unsoftened by a single tear of pure sorrow: and then he writhed as he lay, fevered far more by thought than by physical ills.

II, III

Clym's grief became mitigated by wearing itself out. His strength returned, and he could walk about the garden. Endurance and despair, equanimity and gloom, the tints of health and the pallor of death, mingled weirdly in his face. He was now unnaturally silent upon all of the past that related to his mother.

One day Yeobright set out for the old house at Blooms-End, which, with the garden, was now his own. He unlocked the gate, and found that a spider had constructed a large web, tying the door to the lintel, on the supposition that it was never to be opened again. When he had entered the house and flung back the shutters he set about his task of overhauling the cupboards and closets, and considering how best to arrange the place for Eustacia's reception. While he was thus engaged he heard footsteps on the gravel without, and somebody knocked at the door. Yeobright opened it, and Venn was standing before him. He conducted the reddleman into the large room where the dancing had taken place the previous Christmas. He gave him some particulars of his mother's illness and death. During the conversation, the reddleman said that Mrs. Yeobright had quite forgiven him. Clym remarked: "But Diggory——would a woman, who had quite forgiven her son, say that she was broken hearted because of his

illusage ?" No reply was returned by his companion ; and when Venn left, a few minutes later, Clym had passed from the dullness of sorrow to the fluctuation of carking incertitude.

How to discover a solution of this riddle of death seemed a query of more importance than highest problems of the living. There was housed in his memory a vivid picture of the face of a little boy as he entered the hovel where Clym's mother lay. A visit to the boy suggested itself as a means of gleaning new particulars. Accordingly, he met the boy who gave a detailed account of the incident. He told that a man peeped through the window, and, then, went in the house ; but when Mrs. Yeobright knocked at the door, it was not opened. On hearing these words, Yeobright started at once towards his cottage. Eustacia was standing before the looking-glass in her night-dress. Clym upbraided her very severely, and held her responsible for his mother's death. The clash was very serious ; Eustacia burst into tears. She changed her dress and left the cottage for some unknown destination.

IV

Eustacia's journey was at first as vague in direction as that of thistledown on the wind. She did not know what to do. She wished it had been night instead of morning, that she might at least have borne her misery without the possibility of being seen. Tracing mile after mile along between the dying ferns and the wet white spiders' webs, she at length turned her steps towards her grand-father's house. The door was locked ; and the old man was not present at home. Charley, the servant, managed to open the door. Eustacia went to her room. Charley lit the fire and prepared tea for her.

V

Charley's attentions to his former mistress were unbounded. The only solace to his own trouble lay in his

attempts to relieve hers. For this reason he busily endeavoured to provide her with pleasant distractions, bringing home curious objects which he found in the heath, such as white trumpet-shaped mosses, red head linchers, stone arrow-heads used by the old tribes on Egdon, *etc*.

A week passed, Eustacia never going out of the house. Then she walked into the enclosed plot and looked through her spy-glass, as she had been in the habit of doing before her marriage. One day she saw, at a place where the high-road crossed the distant valley, a heavily ladden wagon passing along. It was piled with household furniture. She looked again and again, and recognised it to be her own. In the evening her grandfather came indoors with a rumour that Yeobright had removed that day from Alderworth to the old house at Blooms-End. One day Eustacia happened to meet Wildeve. She told him that she wanted to leave the place immediately. Wildeve promised to give her every possible help.

VI

Yeobright was at this time at Blooms-End, hoping that Eustacia would return to him. One day his thoughts of Eustacia were intense. He called upon his cousin, Thomasin, and related to her his visit to Susan Nunsuck's boy, the revelation he made, and what had resulted from his charging Eustacia with having wilfully and heartlessly done the deed. He suppressed all mention of Wildeve's presence with her. Thomasin asked Yeobright to get reconciled with his wife. According he wrote a letter to Eustacia. 'There,' he said, as he laid it in his desk, 'thats' a good thing done. If she does not come before tomorrow night I will send it to her."

VII

Having resolved on flight Eustacia at time seemed anxious that something should happen to thwart her intention. The only event that could really change her position was the appearance of Clym.

One evening her determination to go away again revived. About four o'clock she packed up anew the few small articles she had brought in her flight from Alderworth. At eight o'clock, the hour at which Eustacia had promised to signal to Wildeve if ever she signalled at all, she looked around the premises to learn if the coast was clear, went to the furze-rick, and pulled thence a long-stemmed bough of that fuel. This she carried to the corner of the bank, and, glancing behind to see if the shutters were all closed, she struck a light and kindled the furze. When it was throughly ablaze Eustacia took it by the stem and waved it in the air above her head till it had burned itself out. She was gratified by seeing a similar light in the vicinity of Wildeve's residence a minute or two later.

Eustacia returned to the house. Supper having been got over she retired early, and sat in her bedroom waiting for the time to go by. About ten o'clock there was a knock at the door. When the servant opened it, a man gave him a letter for Eustacia and went away. Her grandfather went to her room, and looking in at the keyhole he found there was no light within. He concluded from what he ought not to disturb her, and came back with the letter.

At half-past eleven, finding that the house was silent, Eustacia put on some warm outer wrappings, took her bag in her hand, and descended the staircase. When she got into the outer air she found that it had begun to rain, and as she stood pausing at the door it increased. She, however, continued her journey. Suddenly she realized that she had not money enough for undertaking a long journey. She was not willing to ask Wildeve for pecuniary aid. Thus she was faced with a new problem.

VIII, IX

Wildeve was waiting for Eustacia. His van was standing by the roadside some quarter of a mile below the inn. The place was not far from Shadwater Weir.

In the meantime, Thomasin came to Yeobright, and told him that her husband was making preparations to elope with Eustacia. Yeobright went out in search of Wildeve. Soon, he reached the place where Wildeve was standing. At the same time, a dull sound became audible above the storm and wind. Its origin was unmistakable———it was the fall of a body into the stream in the adjoining mead, apparently at a point near the Weir O, my darling !' exclaimed Wildeve in an agonized voice ; and, without showing sufficient presence of mind even to throw off his great coat, he leaped into the boiling caldron. Yeobright also leaped after him. Eustacia and Wildeve drowned ; but Yeobright was saved due to the timely help of Venn, who had reached there by chance.

BOOK SIXTH

After courses

I, II

The story of the deaths of Eustacia and Wildeve was told throughout Egdon, and far beyond, for many weeks and months. All the known incidents of their love were enlarged, distorted up, and modified, till the original reality bore but a slight resemblance to the counterfieit presentation by surrounding tongues.

Thomasin and Yeobright started living together. But Yeobright was changed man now. His sorrows had made some chang in his outward appearance : and yet the alteration was chiefly within. It might have been said that he had a wrinkled mind. He had no enemies, and he could get nobody to reproach him, which was why he so bitterly reproached himself. He did sometimes think he had been ill-used by fortune, so far as to say that to be born is palpable dilemma, and that instead of men aiming to advance in life with glory they should calculate how to retreat out of it without shame.

One day Venn came to see them. He was quite a different man now. 'I gave up dealing in reddle last Christmas,' said Venn. 'It was a profitable trade, and I found that by that time I had made enough to take the dairy of fifty cows that my father had in his lifetime. I always thought of getting to that place again if I changed at all ; and now I am there.' After a brief chat, he went away.

III, IV

One day Thomasin and Yeobright were sitting together in the garden. The question of Thomasing marriage came under discussion. She told him clearly that she intended to marry Venn. Clym's face suddenly became grace : but he raised no objection. He, though vexed at what seemed her unaccountable taste, was in a measure relieved to find that any rate the marriage question in relation to himself was shelved. Eventually, Thomasin married her simple but loyal lover, Venn. And Clym Yeobright became an itinerant open-air preacher and lecturer on morally unimpeachable subjects.

Principal Characters of the Novel

EUSTACIA VYE

Eustacia Vye is the grand-daughter of Captain Vye, who lives at Mistover on the heath. She is in person full-limbed and somewhat heavy ; Without ruddiness, as without pallor ; and soft to the touch as a cloud. To see her hair is to fancy that a whole winter do not contain darkness enough to form its shadow : it closes over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow. Her nerves extend into these tresses, and her temper can always be softened by stroking them down. When her hair is brushed, she sinks into stillness and looks like the Sphinx.

She has Pagan eyes, full of noturnal mysteries, and their light, as it comes and goes, and comes again, is partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes ; and of these the under lid is much fuller than it usually is with English woman. This enables her to indulge in reverie without seeming to do so.

Eustacia Vye is the raw material of a divinity. She has the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman. She often repeats her prayers, not at particular times, but, like the unaffectedly devout, when she desires to pray. Her prayer is always spontaneous, and often runs thus, "O deliver my heart from this fearful gloom and loneliness : send me great love from somewhere, else I shall die." To be loved to madness—such is her great desire. Love is to her the one cordial which can drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seems to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover.

Eustacia has also masculine qualities. She plays the role of the Turkish Knight ; and her performance is quite admirable and up-to-the mark.

But Eustacia's character has certain drawbacks. In the first place ; she is proud and haughty. She has no liking for other person. She herself says ; I have not much love for my fellow-creature. Some times I quite hate them ; Secondly, she is fickle-minded. She is not constant in her love. She loves Wildeve passionately. But when Clym returns from Paris, she falls in love with him and neglects her former lover ; When Clym's eye-sight fails, she again directs her love towards Wildeve. Thirdly, she is not sincere in her love. Her love is selfish, a means to fulfil her romantic ambitions. When Clym meets her on the heath, he says ; "Shall I claim you some day———I don't mean at once" ? 'I must think,' Eustacia murmured. 'At present speak of Paris to me. Is there any place like it on earth' ?

CLYM YEOBRIGHT

Clym Yeobright is the central figure of the novel. The entire story revolves round his character. As a matter of fact, the novel is nothing but an impressive record of the ups and down of his life.

Clym has an attractive face. The observer's eye is arrested, not by his face as a picture. But by his face as a page ; not by what it is, but by what it records. He lives as a diamond-merchant in Paris. But he is soon disgusted with the artificial life of this fashionable city and returns to Egdon Heath———his native place. He is permeated with its scenes with its substance, and with its odours. He may be said to be its product. He has a profound love for the natural beauties of the heath.

Clym Yeobright is a noble character. He loves his kind. He has a conviction that the want of most men is

knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence. He wishes to raise the class at the expense of individuals rather than individuals at the expense of the class. What is more, he is ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed. He has keen desire to ameliorate the poor and ignorant people. He wants to become a schoolmaster. His mother scolds him for his 'wild fancies'. But his reply is: "Mother I hate the flashy business. Talk about men who deserve the name, can any man deserving the name waste his time in that effeminate way, when he sees half the world going to ruin for want of some body to buckle to and teach them how to breast the misery they are born it ?" Accordingly, he gives up the business of diamonds, and devotes himself to the books. But his eye-sight fails ; and he becomes a furze-cutter. He has the courage and fertitude to face the hardships. He can sing a song when beset with adversities.

He love Eustacia Vye———a bundle of complexes. His love is sincere, passionate and constant. When Eustacia deserts him, he is restless and writes a letter to her. But Fate delivers her last and decisive blow and she is drowned. Clym cherishes her sweet memories and keeps her locks as a souvenir. This shows the depth and sincerity of his love.

Clym is very sensitive. When his mother dies, he reproaches himself as the cause of her death. But it is only his sharp conscience which make him feel so, otherwise he is in no way responsible for the death of his mother.

THOMASIN YEOBRIGHT

Thomasin Yeobright in the niece of Mrs. Yeobright and the cousin of Clym. She stands in strong contrast to Eustacia. Eustacia's character is highly complex, whereas Thomasin is quite simple and austere. In her movements, in her gaze, she reminds the beholder of the feathered creatures who lived around her home.

Thomasin is in love with Wildeve, who considers her 'a pleasing and innocent woman.' Her love for Wildeve is based on any worldly consideration ; it springs from the depths of her heart. Unlike Eustacia, she is not fickle-minded. She remains loyal to Wildeve till the last moment. When he is drowned, she marries Diggory Venn.

She is very fond of her cousin and aunt. When Clyms marries Eustacia and leaves his mother alone, she tries to console her aged aunt. When Clym is ill after his mother's death, she endeavours to comfort him. Her character, though not drawn vividly, leaves a deep impression on the mind of the reader.

DIGGORY VENN

Like Horatio in 'Hamlet,' Diggory Venn represents the norm of equanimity in a world fraught with violent emotions and crisis. He looks at the chain of events with evenmindedness, and steps in only to prevent the affairs from taking a tragic twist.

He is in passionate love with Thomasin, for whom he is ready to make every sacrifice. At the very out-set, we find him carrying Thomasin in his van. When he comes to know that Eustacia is a hurdle in her smooth relations with Wildeve, he visits her and requests her not to stand in the way of an innocent girl. Again, when Christian loses hundred guineas of Mrs. Yeobright to Wildeve in the gambling, he wins them back ; and, later on, gives them to Thomasin. All this he does out of sympathy and love.

Venn is a noble character. He endeavours to promote the cause of peace and happiness. He tries to bring about reconciliation between Mrs. Yeobright and her son. He, later on, serves the life of Clym.

Diggory Venn is, by profession, a reddleman ; but he has attractive appearance. His eye, which glares so strangely through his stain, is itself attractive. He has neither

wisher nor moustache, which allows the soft curves of the lower part of his face to be apparent. His lips are thin, and though, as it seems, compressed by thought, there is always a pleasant twitch at their corners now and then. When Wildeve dies, Thomasin marries him. His marriage with Thomasin is, perhaps, the reward of his unselfish and sincere love.

WILDEVE.

Wildeve seems to be the villain of the peace. Like Eustacia, he is fickle-minded. He has no moral scruples. He plays with the emotions of two girls simultaneously. He marries Thomasin simply because he wants to punish Eustacia, who has fallen in love with Clym Yeobright. His marriage with Thomasin does not prevent him for indulging in romantic activities. He continues to pay secret visits to Eustacia, the wife of Clym. He is willing to assist her in elopement. But he is caught in his own snare, and meets his tragic end.

He provides a sharp contrast to Diggory Venn, who is constant and sincere in his love. Again, he lacks the moral strength of Yeobright. But he is, by nature, romantic. When Eustacia's marries with Yeobright accentuates his love. He goes out in the evening, looks at the moon and Euatacia's cottage, and suspires.

Questions and Answers

Q. "'Jude the Obscure' in an artistic failure." How far do you agree with this view ?

Answer. Some critics consider 'Jude the Obscure' as an artistic failure, they advance certain arguments in support of their claim. Now let us make a critical survey of these arguments.

In all his greatest novels, they says, the tragic effect is partly gained by the sense of an inevitable doom which hangs heavy over the characters. In 'Far from the Madding Crowd', in 'The Mayor of Casterbridge', in 'Tess of The D' Urbervilles' this sense of inevitable fate, which sometimes turns to naght men's worthiest efforts, in a legitimate and potent element in the tragedy. But Mr. Hardy's idea of Destiny is by no means stationary, and in its latest development in this book it becomes almost grotesque. Even in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, though there the idea was not so pronounced as to be repellent, the notion seems shaping itself in Mr. Hardy's mind that fate is not merely a blind force that happens at times to up set men's calculations and to turn their strength into weakness, but rather a spiteful Providence whose special delight it is to scorn off men, and whose proceedings make anything but absolute quietism an absurdity. In Tess, there are indications of this notion, but here it is predominant.

Another reason why this bitterness is fatal to art is that the novelist loses his sense of humour. In this self-imposed task of heaping obloquy on Fate or Providence or Destiny, he casts about for all sorts of devices for making his characters miserable. It is wonderful, for example, what a number of trains they miss and how much of their

misery depends on this. The fact is that Hardy, in his anger against Destiny and in his desire to make Destiny and its off-spring Society odious, has over reached himself, and has entirely failed in attaining what, in his preface, he professes to be his object——to expose 'the tragedy of unfulfilled aims.' In fact there is no tragedy, at any rate so far as Jude's unfulfilled aims go, because it is impossible to understand the man and feel sympathy for him, and without there is no tragedy possible. Jude is rather a flabby atom without any individuality, who does things because Hardy wants to point a moral by them.

There is another reason why the tragedy is not a real tragedy as Mr. Hardy sees it. His whole point would seem to be that men are made miserable by the combined efforts of destiny and Society when they are disobedient to the laws of society. But the fact is that Hardy's characters have a habit of trying to combine obedience to their own private wishes with obedience to society and also to outrage her laws when it pleases them. Sue and Jude may have been right in their detestation and abandonment of the marriage ties——that is not the question; the point is that if they act as they did with their eyes open, it is absurd of them to repine because society and destiny do not accept their conduct in the same way as they do. There is no tragedy in the foolish weakness of their behaviour as displayed here——it is merely ludicrous.

The sense of a gloomy background of nature, conveyed more by little hints than by set descriptions, it is still as striking as ever, and some of the minor characters are decidedly telling. Phillotson, the husband of Sue, both in his strength and his weaknes is a very living character; and Arabella's father, though little more than hinted at, furnishes a suggestion of a gloomy, sullen face which is undeniably real.

The story is a tragedy and tragedy almost unrelieved by the humorous touch which the poet is master of. The grotesque is there abundantly, but not the comic; and at

times this ugliness heightens the pathos to almost intolerable effect.

These opinions are rather misleading. Mrs. Oliphan strongly refutes them. And her opinion seems to be plausible and convincing. Jude the Obscure is a very different kind of book from Tess. In Tess the entire interest of the novel is attached to the life of a woman; in Jude just as in the Mayor of Casterbridge, it gathers round the career of a man. The history of Jude's ineffectual efforts to obtain a University Education is intensely pathetic. After the reading of the novel, every reader finds it difficult to keep back his tears. This story of crushed aspirations can only be appreciated by those who have the power of true sympathy. Unfortunately, we live in an age when nearly all human beings are concerned only with their material success in the world. The word 'failure' makes them tremble; and, no doubt, Hardy's apparent pessimism is distasteful to the innumerable throng of vulgar-minded aspirants whose only gospel is to 'get on' by hook or by crook. How could we expect the modern young man to enter into the feeling of a poor rustic stone-cutter who dreamed of taking out his degree and becoming a clergyman. The love-affair of so obscure an individual may excite the attention of the unambitions middle-aged man, but not of the youthful prig of our day. The relations between Sue and her cousin will necessarily appear impure to those who see nothing but uncleanness in the relations of a married man and woman who is not his wife. But Hardy is not to blame for the brutishness of some of his readers' mind any more than Miranda is to blame for Caliban's beastly thought about her. The novel is a master-piece of Hardy.

Imp

Q. "Jude the Obscure' is an attack upon the institution of marriage." Discuss.

Answer. Mrs. Oliphant holds the view that Jude the Obscure' is an attack upon the institution of marriage.

She says : "We rather think the author's object must be, having glorified women by the creation of Tess, to show what destructive and ruinous creatures they are, in general circumstances and in every development, whether brutal or refined." To many reviewers have treated Jude as a polemic against marriage. Nothing could be more unjust. It is true that the tragedy of Jude and Sue was partly brought about by the marriage laws, but their own weakness of character was mainly responsible for it ; and Hardy's novel, in so far it is an indictment, it is an indictment of much older and crueller laws than those relating to marriage, the laws of universe. To conceive novel as a criticism of marriage is to miss its far more universal tragical significance. The attack of Mrs. Oliphante is grossly unjust and exceedingly pointless. No doubt, Jude

"........................is not meant
For little people or for fools.'.

It is a story for grown-ups. It handles delicate problem and situations with infinite delicacy and tenderness. In 'Jude the Obscure' we find for the first time in English literature the reality of marriage clearly recognised as something wholly apart from the more ceremony with the novelists have usually identified it. Hardy clearly points out that the marriage of Jude and Arabella proves a failure because they "based a permanent contract on a temporary feeling which had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a life-long comradeship tolerable." Sue Bridehead, another prominent character in Jude the Obscure, remarks : "Domestic laws should be made according to temperaments, which should be classified. If people are at all peculiar in character they have to suffer from the very rules that produce comfort in others," This is also the opinion of Hardy. He thinks that marriage should be based not on temporary emotions, but on some deep understanding. Thus we feel that the novel is not an attack on the institution of marriage ; its concern is with the errors which lead to 'unsuccessful marriage.' But here a word of caution. The novel is not a mere criticism of

marriage; its significance and tragic appeal lies in the manipulation of profound issues of life.

Q. Write a short note on Hardy's Women characters.

Answer. A novelist's power is tested by his handling of women. And Hardy presents a fascinating piece of investigation in this respect. Duffin classifies his woman characters in three groups. The first group consists of full-length portraits of women. They are of a higher order of personality. To this group belong Tess, Sue, Eustacia, Bathsheba and Elizabeth Jane. The second group again is of full-length study of women but of less personal significance. To this group belong Elfride, Ethelberta, Grace, Viviette, and Anne. To the third group belong women of much less significance and they are Paula, Fancy, Marty Arabella, Lucetta and Picotee. These are women in the background but of intense individual interest.

Hardy calls Tess 'woman of character,' and so she is, unbroken, unspoilt, unadulterated, unflawed, perfect. She is the very symbol of the purity of spirit. Her behaviour, her thoughts, her desires, on all critical occasions are unimpeachable, consider we may, from any critical point of view. Her shame and remorse are infinite. Her conscience is amazing. Mentally and morally she is stainless. Even to the last her mind, in the period of her dissipation with Alee, is drugged, and dead with wariness, pain and despair and so guiltless. Unfortunately in Tess the flesh was slightly at variance with her spirit. We read very early: "She had an attribute which...........caused D'Urberville's eyes to rivet themselves upon her. It was a luxuriousness of aspect, a fulness of growth, which made her appear more of a woman than she really was. She had inherited the feature from her mother without the quality it denoted." Hardy here denies the quality of purity, and in many places Hardy emphasizes the animal nature of Tess. "How very lovely her face was to him. Yet there was noting ethereal about it, all was vitality, real warmth, real incarnation.

And it was in her mouth that this culminated." Her face was flushed with sleep, and her eyelids hung heavy over their pupils. The brimfulness of her nature breathed from her. In the almost standard phrase of Hardy we find the explanation of her fall. Her mind had the touch of yieldingness that was just necessary to allow the touch of animality in her flesh to respond to great external pressure. The life within her is irresponsible——'she little recked the strength of her own vitality.' She is high strung, impressionable, and poetic. She is heroic and generous, and simple too. She remains the most lovable of Hardy's heroines.

Sue presents a glaring contrast to Tess. Sue is sexless to some extent and this lily wants marriage without sexual union. But it is not all. She can associate with men, live with them, and talk with them on any subject-matter under the sun in an impersonal way. She has strange power. And this is most dangerous also. She does not know the frality of fire. She is as vividly shown as Tess. She is as intellectual as Elizabeth Jane. She is sensitive, often perversive, and alive with emotions and impulsive occasionally. Jude's comment on this girl is noteworthy: "Mrs. Edlin, she was once a woman whose intellect was to mine like a star to a bezoline lamp who saw all my superstitions. As cobwebs she could brush away with a word. Then bitter affliction came to us, and her intellect broke, and she veered round to darkness." "A woman of spiritual quality, born to live a life of fine passion, she made intellect her star: perhaps the complex that resulted in the explanation of her tragedy."

Of almost supreme interest is Elizabeth Jane. She is the only girl with eyes of grey. Only long acquaintance makes her vivid. She is single-hearted and is ready to sacrifice personal comfort for common weal. She is a flower of Nature.

Discussion of every group, in an essay like this, would be really too much. It is enough to note that the range

and depth are bewildering. Every woman is distinct from the other. Hardy's power of differentiation is not a universal possession of all novelists. He knows human nature remarkably accurately. But in women nature he is the most marvellously learned. He knows woman psychology to a remarkably absolute degree. His woman characters are far better than his male characters, and they play more significant part in the life of the story than men.

Q. Is Hardy a realist or an idealist? Discuss.

Answer. Realism in English fiction came with Defoe who in his novels, 'Robinson Crusoe' and 'Moll Flanders' created a tremendous illusion of reality. The eighteenth century novelists, particularly Fielding, gave a new theory of fiction namely that a novel is a comic epic poem in prose. Realism was made by Fielding the greatest characteristic of a novel. In all his novels, particularly, in 'Tom Jones' and 'Joseph Andrews' he gave a real and faithful account of the contemporary English life. After Fielding realism and romanticism walked hand in hand. It was only in the hands of Dickens that realism flourished most powerfully. In the hands of Thomas Hardy again, realism became a great force. Let us now discuss the element of realism as it is observed in the novels of Hardy.

The series of the novels written by Hardy are known by the name of Wessex novels. All these novels are a faithful presentation of the life of this district of England. The local colour is an expression of realism. Hardy has so realistically painted the man and women, villages and towns, fields and markets, rivers and roads, valleys and forests, animals and birds that many of the readers of his novels have been led to find and see their originals in the country. In fact, all these descriptions are imaginary but the illusion of reality is so powerfully created that they all appear to be highly convincing. Hardy says that a certain lady of Scotland came to him and said that he had given in the character of Farfrae the image of her

husband whereas Hardy had never seen him. The same is known to have happened about Tess. The wife of Hardy gives a very striking account of the sensitive temperament of her husband. He had remarkably accurate observation. That is one of the reasons why he succeeded so largely in producing in his novels characters of flesh and blood. In a very few words Hardy paints his characters and we can easily distinguish the one from the other. All of them have their strongly developed personalities. Tess, Jude, Bathsheba, Eustacia, Yoebright are examples of his realistic creations.

The greatest expression of Hardy's realism is found in the portrayal of his low characters. It appears that Hardy is happiest in the company of these rustics. He knows them most intimately, their manners, their appearances, their motives and their actions. He knows that they are orthodox, conventional, superstitious, drunkards and given to easy ways of life. He does not caricature these characters, nor does he idealize them but presents them, both men and women exactly as they are.

The plots of Hardy except a few situations and events where the novelist has been taken away by his prejudices and poetic fancy, are all realistic. All of them deal with country life the knowledge of which Hardy possessed in plenty. It is only in the description of complex town-life where he is not successful. His love stories are perfectly compact. They are convincing and realistic. Every novel demonstrates the closelyknit character of Hardy's plots, the manner in which events follow one another in an inevitable sequence of cause and effect.

The theme of Hardy's novels is always realistic. Hardy knows the effect of modern civilization on rural life. All his novels remarkably show this clash. The various problems that have risen in the sphere of social life have been quite honestly studied and presented. 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' has the problem of labour and capitalism beautifully presented. Farfrae is capitalist whose

commerce is based upon the use of uptodate machines and latest business techniques. By dint of his sound tact and tricks, he becomes the richest man of the town, and Henchard who still lingers on his old and unscientific methods of commerce cannot compete with him. Farfrae is a typical modern capitalist who is unfeeling and unsparing. He reduces the wages of his labourers and takes hard work from them. This problem of labour and capital conflict which is gravely confronting our modern social life, has been very realistically handled by Hardy. The same problem is found in 'Far from the Madding Crowd,' where Oak the labourer bleeds and Bathsheba the land-lady feeds. She has enough pride of wealth to reject the faithful lover who helps her in fire and water, and marries a soldier who is nothing less than a wealthy and brilliant rogue. It is only the misfortunes of her later life that teaches her the proper lesson and brings her round to marry Oak.

In 'Tess and Jude', excepting a few minor defects, Hardy has handled his material in a manner which is perfectly real and true to experience. What happens to Tess has happened to so many girls in life. There is nothing improbable or unconvincing about what she thinks, feels and does. The conflict between her moral character and social conventions is quite natural. In 'Jude' the problem in real and Hardy's treatment thereof is also realistic. It was but natural for Jude to have met the end of his life in the way in which he did. Who can by challenging social customs and conventions gain happiness and peace of mind ?

However, the most convincing expression of Hardy's realism is found in his treatment of nature. He has neither spiritualized nature like Wordsworth, nor idealized it like Shelley. He has found nature as it is, more than often, indifferent to human life. Nature seldom cares to see whether its effects and influence make man happy or unhappy. It has its own ways and moods, and works according to its own fixed mechanical laws. Furthermore, Hardy's descriptions of the different phases of nature,

gentle as well as fierce, are astonishingly realistic in their tone. There is more truth and accuracy of account than can be found in the work of any poet or prose-writer of nature. Hardy was passionately in love with nature, but without being sentimental or superstitious about it. Some of his readers have attempted to locate his natural descriptions and have succeeded in this respect to large measure.

In his attitude towards marriage and sex relations Hardy appears before us as a semi-realistic thinker. He holds that marriage is an ideals affair not to be based on mere physical considerations or bound by rigid social conventions. It is a spiritual union of two willing souls, and no external force should be allowed to interfere in the formation of this sacred tie. Love should mature into marriage through gradual stages of courtship——— a period during which the lovers should have the full liberty of understanding each other's outlook and abilities, and of fitting themselves in each other's mould as perfectly as possible. Hasty and unequal marriages always result in misery and frustration, as is shown in 'Jude the Obscure' and the opening scene of 'The Mayor of Casterbridge'. It is in this respect that we find Hardy soaring on an idealistic plan. He dreams of an ideal marriage, a perfect spiritual union which is the fruit of a long-continued courtship, forgetting that even in those modernized groups of human society where courtship is a natural stage prior to marriage, happiness and harmony of the couple are not guaranteed. It is a matter of chance that we get partners of our liking and thereby make our domestic life happy and peaceful. True love is not sought, but found. But Hardy forgets this fact when he speaks of lover's effort at courtship. He forgets that :

> "*Society, friendship and love* (*are*)
> *Divinely bestowed upon man*".

Despite this, Hardy is a realist as well as a social rebel who discards the long-standing notion of a woman's physical chastity. He supports widow's remarriage and

declares that the loss of physical chastity is not invariably the loss of spiritual purity. Chastity and purity, he thinks, are spiritual possessions. And if a woman can maintain her purity morally, she is definitely 'a woman of pure character' as it is shown in 'The Tess of D' Urbervilles'. With regard to divorce also Hardy's views are modern and progressive. Without being orthodox he recommends this remedy in extreme cases where the life of couple has become altogether unendurable.

The charge of idealism is levelled against Hardy generally because in his novels we come across an amount of suffering, gloom and frustration, which is hard to match with the conditions of the actual world. The life we live is not always an unending series of failures and disappointments ; it has its occasional periods of sunshine and success also. Truly speaking, human life is a mixture, a blending of good and evil, success and failure, tears and laughters. But Hardy concentrates mostly on one side of the picture and over-looks the other. He forgets laughter and remembers only tears. He paints a world which is enveloped by unmitigated gloom and darkness with no ray of hope, no light of faith. Even the little humour which his rustic characters provide is of a very grim and sardonic nature. It flashes across the dark horizon of his world like swift strokes of lightening, suggesting thunder and devastation, rather than like silver lines, inspiring hope and happiness. The characters in this world are placed in such situations and circumstances that they are deliberately made to appear punny and puppet-like in the face of a relentless irony of fate. The plot is so arranged and the events so designed and invented that they but shorten the hopes and ambitions of the characters and bring unthinkable doom and destruction on their innocent lives. Mostly Hardy's novels are love-stories, but as Lascelles Abercrombie points out, "the love intrigues of Hardy's stories seem to be consciously invented as though the novelist wished to prove that there could never be any happy ending to a love-affair". Priestly also holds that tragedy in Hardy is mostly 'false

and forced,' But here we should not forget that Hardy's business was not merely to describe things as they are, as a historian or a scientist does, but to give his own vision of life, sincerely perceived and artistically rendered. He had his own temperament and personality, experiences and associations, which moulded his outlook on life and which gave a typically individual colour to his works. Hardy was a realist in the sense that his views had the force of personal wisdom and insight and that they were expressed with perfect fidelity and sincerity in an unbroken series of his novels and short stories. He gave, in his works, not a mechanical photograph of things, men and manners he came across in life, for no artist does that, but a lively and speaking picture which was a real work of literary art. But the imaginative atmosphere in which Hardy writes these things, does not diminish their substantial reality. Hardy's world is never dreamlike or phantasmal. His feet are always on earth. Hardy said that highest art was that which, though changing the appearance of what it describes, only does so in order to bring out its essential reality. He himself had this kind of art. In his bold union of fastasy and fundamental truth, idealism and realism, he is unique among English novelists. In the words of David Cecil, "Hardy's most extravagant flowers of fantasy are firmly rooted in the common soil of human life."

Q. Trace poetic qualities in the novels of Thomas Hardy.

Or

"He (Thomas Hardy) has achieved his purpose of giving a novel the imaginative force of poetry——— and the highest poetry, the poetry of the book of Job."———(David Cecil). Discuss the underlying idea of this statement.

Or

"If there is any fiction that is a type of poetic novel

in its spirit, it is surely the Wessex novels."——— (Arthur Modowall). Discuss.

Answer. Hardy belongs to the family of writers like Scott, Emily Bronte and Meredith who, besides being novelists, are distinguished poets also. Hardy discovered early that he was poet. "I began to write poetry because I had to because of orders from within." Orders from within but no encouragement from without. "I sent my verse out ; it invariably came back. No editors even touched it for years." Not that his poems were faultless, and the orthodox editors could not agree to the revolutionary bent of the new poet's mind. Hardy had everything necessary for poetic genius———music, imagination, sympathy, a feeling for the apt phrase, a conciseness of thought, a magic 'that turned syllables into stars'——— everything, in short, except the critical sense, a power to give his thoughts an appropriate form. His creative imagination was too wide and extensive to be concentrated in the limited compass of short lyrics. It needed for its play a canvas probably as vast as that of a novel or an epic. Hardy, therefore, turned to the novel, for he knew that he could find there enough scope not only for the expression of his poetic urges but also for the fulfilment of his love of story telling which was equally a powerful element of his artistic character.

Hardy who failed as a poet succeeded as a novelist. What he wanted to give in verse, but could not, he gave in his long series of novels with greater ease and freedom. Hudson has rightly remarked, "As a writer Hardy was a living paradox. A natural poet, all his best poetry is nevertheless in prose. He had the poet's largeness, minuteness and intensity of vision———a threefold faculty displayed throughout his novels." It is true that the depth of fancy and passion which Hardy has revealed in his novels is more stirring than that of any poets. If a book is a work of art in so far as the imagination inspiring it has transfigured the author's experience, no novels are

more aesthetic than Hardy's. His novels are the products of an imagination which is unfailing fresh, unforced, fertile in expression and of the highest power. They present us with the pictures of life which are intensified by the ardour and freaked by the fancy of a poet's vision. Hardy never presents us with a mere record of his observation ; always it is the observation coloured by the peculiar tinge of the artist's personality, vitalised by the energy of the artist's temperament. Hardy's books are always pictures, and never photographs : and we like them as we like pictures ———for aesthetic reasons ; not only because they recall reality to us but because they stir our emotions directly and by their own individual quality.

Hardy's creative or poetic imagination finds its expression in every aspect of his novels———in character, episode, landscape, vividly depicted scenes, hightened tone of style, and tales brilliantly opened and eloquently ended. Let us first of all take up his characters. Unlike those of classical drama, the chief characters of Hardy belong to humbler ranks of rural society. They are mostly as Lionel Johnson writes, 'the farm hands, woodlanders, shepherds, dairy maids, labourers, servants cottagers." Yet the perspective in which they are looked by their creator makes them as grand and sublime as any of the great heroes of Greek or Elizabethan drama. As David Cecil writes, 'Though simple, they are grand and passionate. They feel more strongly, reflect more profoundly. The eyes of each are fixed upon one subject (mostly love), for which they are prepared to sacrifice anything ; and if they fail to get it, their life is ruined." They are figures touched with an imaginative light to glow forth with a special pathos, an added majesty. They are not painted as individual, but as symbols of mankind fighting against the forces of Destiny. It is significant to note that Hardy writes about man, not about men. Though his great characters are distinguished one from another clearly enough, their individual qualities are made subsidiary to their typical human qualities. And as their stories increase in tension, they tend to shed their individual differences

and to assume the impersonal majesty of a representative of all mankind. Giles stand for all faithful lovers ; Tess for all betrayed women ; Henchard for all aspiring souls ending in misery and destruction. These characters linger in our imagination as grand typical figures outlined against the huge horizon of the universe. Here they resemble characters of epic and tragedy. Indeed, alike in his themes and in his treatment of them, Hardy has less in common with the typical novelist than with the typical author of tragedy and epic. During the moments of their pitched struggle with Destiny personified now as Nature than as Society, now as chance then as circumstances, the tragic heroes of Hardy rise to great heights of poetic grandeur and sublimity ; Tess, forsaken by Angel ; Clym gazing down at the dead wife who can never now hear his words of forgiveness ; Henchard sinking to death in complete despair. Hardy has charged these people with 'all the emotional grandeur of a great tragedy'. Particularly his women characters which play a part of greater importance in his novels than their brothers are perfect models of poetic beauty and enchantment. Fresh in their body and lyrical in their passion, they have all the charm, delicacy and modesty which are common to their sex. As David Cecil says, "The peculiar charm of each character exhales from her every moment like the perfume from a flower". Particularly Elizabeth Jane, Anne Garland and Picotee have a spiritual beauty which we can 'neither custom stale nor time wither'. They are regarded by Grimsditck as 'primroses in the Wessex garden'.

Apart from characters, the plots of Hardy's novels are equally poetic and picturesque. As they hinge on the description of country life, they have something of the folk-song'. They turn on a vivid portrayal of the genial farcial humours of village life, country customs and ceremonies and gaities, carol-singing, harvest homes, may-poles, etc. In respects of plots, Hardy's imagination expresses itself in his power of visualisation. His tales of the Wessex life are not mere narratives to be heard but bright pictures to be seen by the eyes. He constructs

his novels in a series of dramatic pictures. His technique, as David Cecil remarks, is that of the modern director of films. We watch the story. The scene opens, we take it with our eyes; then, some one begins to speak, and the action gradually unfolds itself. In 'The Mayor of of Casterbridge', the curtain rises, as it were, and we are face to face with a road with two figures moving along it. How poetic the description is!

Closely associated with Hardy's power of pictorial description is his power of visual intention, the power of creating poetic episodes. It is not just that he makes us see a scene. He invents scenes, which of their very nature stir the imagination. Not only does he describe the incident graphically; the incident is imaginatively conceived. The sword-drill in 'Far from the Madding Crowd'; the gambling scene in 'The Return of the Native'; the sleep-walking scene in Tess of the D' Urbervilles' are the scenes which have something of the en-chantment of verse. There is a scene of this nature in 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' when Henchard wanders on to the bridge of the river, wondering whether he shall kill himself; and then, gazing into the water in the twilight, he sees with a thrill of horror his own drowned body floating pallid on the waves. In reality, it is an effigy of him which his enemies have been parading about the town and have now thrown away. But, for the minute, he takes it as a supernatural omen. The incident conveys his absolute despair, and his curse that he cannot escape. Such scenes and episodes are as David Cecil remarks, "poetic inventions, the expression of the same concentrated activity of the imagination as a brilliant metaphor or a moving cadence of verse".

In the description of his scenes and objects, it is further significant to note, Hardy brings a subjective approach, which is characteristic of a poet rather than a novelist. He does not describe things as facts, but discover their inner significance. His description of anything is soaked in the atmosphere of the mood which it evokes in him,

with all the attendant trains of thoughts it suggests. Let us read the following description of two bridges from 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' :

"These bridges had speaking countenances. Every projection in each was worn down to obtuseness, partly by weather more by friction from generations of longers, whose toes and Reels had from year to year made restless movements against these parapets, as they had stood there meditating on the aspect of affairs".

Such a description is a poet's description. The facts are described but subjectively. The scene is vividly presented to the eye, but still more vividly to the mind; Hardy penetrates beneath the material facts to reveal their imaginative significance. 'The bridges had speaking countenance' is an operative sentence in the passage, and it is operative because it is bathed in a poetic light. It infuses into bare facts that mystery and magic which make it ever memorable. This mystery and magic spring not from the scene so much as from Hardy's reaction to it, the way in which it sets his fancy working. His creative power shows itself in his ability to communicate to us, not only the facts of the scene, but its significance to the imagination.

Though Hardy looked at Nature from a pessimistic point of view and regarded it as one of those factors that play ruin on the life of man, his love of the picturesque aspect of natural scenery was as profound and passionate as that of any Nature-poet. Like Wordsworth he was 'constantly in the watch to find a human meaning in every part of the face of Nature'. In his long series of Wessex novels, he paints several pictures of landscape, the natural environment in which his characters have to work, live, love and die. As we enter his world of Wessex scenes, we see before us a grand panorma of pasture valleys, the long white roads, the wooded hills, stretches of pastoral greenery, a dreamy cluster of little houses, the villages, the deep meadows, fields full of sheep or

cows, the clear rivers and bridges, the grey, green downlands, and the brown dark heaths. Hardy with his keen observation not only absorbs minute details and changes in the outward features of landscape, but also with sure artistic touch suffuses his landscape with human personality. It is rightly said that for Hardy "seasons have their moods; morning and evening, night and noon have their temperaments: winds, trees, waters, clouds, silences and constellations have their dispositions; and all speak to us in voices audible to the spirits." In short, Hardy's method of the description of nature or landscape is that of a poet. His eyes are open to every delicate shade of colour, and he constantly creates the illusion in the reader's mind that he is in the actual spot described. We can see the dust rising from the hut roadway, hear the rain's varying sounds as it falls on different crops, mark the twisting and turning of leaves in a breeze, note the cloud 'down upon the line of a distant ridge, like an upper upon a lower eyelid, shutting in the gaze of the evening sun!' In this respect, his power of framing vivid and beautiful metaphors and similes has much to do with his success in reproducing impressions from natural scenes and sights. Frequent use of similes from living things serves to deepen the sense of the inaminate as a personality. The road, says Hardy, bisects the vast dark surface of the heath "like the parting-line on the head of black hair, the moss-clothed roots of the trees look like 'green gloves', 'the bloated white visage (face) of the winter's day, emerging like a dead-born child' and about all the rising sun is "a golden-haired, beaming, mild-eyed, God-like creature going down in the vigour and intentness of youth upon an earth that was brimming with interest for him............The sun had a personal look, demanding the masculine pronoun for its adequate expression." Such similes and metaphors employed for the description of natural aspects impart to his landscape an atmosphere of what David Cecil says 'romantic poetry.'

On the whole, Hardy's books communicate in every respect———character, plot, landscape and language——

a much higher temperament of feeling than most novels do. His emotions, though simple as they are concerned with rustic life, embrace both heights and depths, from black despair to ecstatic joy. Hardy's pessimism did not spring from a low spirited temperament. On the contrary, the same sensibility that made him so acutely susceptible to life's sorrows made him also exquisitely responsive to its joys. In his novels he has painted not only spectacles of sufferings but also delightful scenes of feasts and parties, singing and dancing. His minor characters live in a world of their own, full of ordinary joys of life. They are a sort of chorus which is the symbol of the great majority of humdrum mortals, who go on living through their uneventful day whatever catastrophes may overtake the finer spirits placed among them. While the life of the major characters contains the poetry of tragedy, the life of minor characters in Hardy's novels has the poetry of comedy.

Really Hardy's novels are half-way to poems, and it is significant to note that Patmore——a very acute critic——did urge Hardy on one occasion to put his novels in verse form. Nevertheless, his novels do not suffer much on account of the form in which they are written. After all the real spirit of poetry lies in its emotional content, and not merely in its technical form. Judged by this standard, Hardy's novels are as much the works of poetry as the dramas of Shakespeare.

Q. "The poet in him (Hardy) will make trees as lively as men, while the next moment the philosopher in him will make men as helpness as trees".——(J.B. Priestley). Discuss the statement.

Answer. The imagination of Hardy which found its immortal embodiment in his Wessex novels was characterized by two elements. First, it was intensely poetic; so much so that he thought himself as a poet rather than

a philosopher. But there was also in him that love of impassioned meditation, that insight into the deeper problems of human existence which is the characteristic mark of the philosopher. And his genius only found complete fulfilment when both these elements in him had full scope.

The poetic bent of Hardy's imagination is best reflected in his treatment of nature, and country-side scenery. It is true that he looks upon Nature from a pessimistic point of view, and regards it as one of those factors that play havoc with the life of man, but his love of the picturesque aspects of a landscape or natural scenery is as profound and passionate as that of any bonafide poet of Nature. He chooses to confine his attention to the portrayal of the life and manners of rustic people for he knows that they live in a close contact with Nature and that their life has all the poetry of their picturesque environment; "That poetry" he says, "which, in spite of the sting of poverty, is inseparable from such a condition of life as the country man's lies in his absolute dependence on the woods, air, earth and sky. Sun, rain, snow, wind, dawn, darkness, mist are to him, now as ever, personal assistants and instructors, masters and acquaintances with whom he comes directly into contact, whose varying tempers must be well considered before he can act with effect." In his Wessex novels men and women are conceived as the children of earth, living in the society of trees, winds and waters; they find companionship in creatures of the woodland and the field; their hopes, fears, experiences, their faith and love, sorrow and hate, are nourished by the mighty Mother Earth. As we enter his world of Wessex scenes we see a grand panorama gradually unrolling to our view pasture valleys, the high downs, the long white roads, the wooded hills, stretches of pastoral greenery, the deep meadows, fields full of sheep or cows, the clear rivers and bridges, the grey, green downlands, and the brown, dark heaths. The town of Casterbridge in "The Mayor of Casterbridge" appears as a 'mosaic work of subdued reds, browns and crystals, held together, by a rectangular frame of deep green."

The poet in Hardy does not simply take interest in describing the objects and scenes of Nature but also penetrates the surface and grasps their underlying spirit. He suffuses the landscape with the gleam of his poetic imagination. With a few words he makes us live in the spot described, and smell the damp wood, and catch the change in the wind's voice as it travels through each kind of tree. It is rightly said that for Hardy "seasons have their mood; morning and evening, night and noon have their temperaments; winds, trees, waters, clouds, silences and constellations have their dispositions; and all speak to us in voice audible to the spirit." An artist of his power not only absorbs minute details and changes in the world around him, but also links them with human personality with perfect skill. His ears are open to very slight sound; he sees and makes us see every delicate shade of colour, and he constantly creates an illusion in the reader's mind that he is in the actual place described. We can see the dust rising up from the hot roadway, hear the rain's varying sound as it falls on different crops, mark the twisting and turning of leaves in a breeze, note the cloud closing "down upon the line of a distant ridge, like an upper upon a lower eyelid, shutting in the gaze of the evening sun." His power of framing vivid and beautiful metaphors and similes has much to do with his success in reproducing impressions from without. Frequent use of similes and metaphors from living things serves to deepen the sense of the inanimate as a personality. The road, says Hardy, bisects the vast dark surface of the heath 'like the parting-line on a head of black hair'; the town of Casterbridge looked from a distance appears 'like a chess board on a green table-cloth.' Such similes and metaphors impart to his landscape an atmosphere of what David Cecil says 'romantic poetry.'

In his attitude towards Nature Hardy is deeply and broodingly poetical, so that he can look at nothing long, though it is only an ordinary thing, a stick or stone, without bringing it to life. Nature herself is one of the characters

in his novels; the wood in 'The Woodlanders' and Egdon Heath in 'The Return of the Native' become living presences in the fiction. No other novelist is his equal in thus suggesting the vast brooding life of the earth itself. Egdon Heath is conceived and presented as 'a face upon which time makes but little impression.' It is personified; it throbs with life; it is omnipotent in its sombreness and vastness, with the people inhabitating it being completely under the sway of its influences.

Thus Nature is painted by Hardy as a background against which his men and women live their brief life of pleasure and pain, and pass away making room for their successors. The Wessex people living in the closest contact with Nature are to its vital products. Divorced from the scenery they are weak and meaningless, moving in it, they are so much a part of it that they express its primaeval grandeur. Thus, while the poet in Hardy describes Nature as a beautiful picture, the philosopher in him links it with human associations. His Wessex is the special environment of his characters, whose development can not be understood without reference to it. Where former novelists saw their characters moving, as it were, before a painted wall; he sees them in their environment like fish in a tank. The woods and heaths of Wessex, the clouds and rains, its prejudices and customs, and even its market prices, the whole atmosphere of the time and place, are the tank, and the souls of his characters are the fish. And this scientific approach of his, inspired by a view of the universe that is beginning now to remind us of some clumsy old machine, leads him in a contrary direction, and we discover him robbing his very characters themselves of their freedom and vitality. Nature then becomes a soulless mechanical process, having no sympathy with the tragedy of the people who float of her surface. The poet in Hardy makes Nature a fine picturesque background, but the philosopher in him makes it an actor in the play, an incarnation of a living force with a will and purpose of its own———now and again taking an actual hand in the story———ruining

Henchard's crops, killing Giles———but more often standing aloof, the silent and ironic spectator of the petty human insects who struggle on its face. Men may come and men may go but like Tennyson's brook it flows on for ever. It moves in its appointed course———warming to spring, yellowing to autumn, with recurrent punctuality, careless whether Tess dies or Anne finds her true love. Now and again the personality of nature seems to step forward and with one tremendous gesture dwarf the human beings in the story into insignificance. Man becomes a mere shadow, a weak helpless pigmy and Nature becomes a giant, a cruel giant threatening him as relentlessly as Fate. Thus in Hardy's novels we listen, as it were, to two movements, the movement of man's life and the movement of nature's. The first is the work of a philosopher, the second is the work of a poet.

Q. Write a note on Hardy's philosophy of life.

Answer. Critics have generally attempted to present Hardy as a philosopher and to describe his view of life by various names such as 'determinism', 'fatalism', 'pessimism' and so on, although Hardy himself always disclaimed all such high-sounding denominations to be applied to his works. In all his well-known prefaces he repeatedly wrote that his 'novels were only impressions' or——— 'a series of seemings or even personal fugitive impressions'. He maintained that "a novel is an impression, not an argument. A tale-teller writes down how the things of the world strike him without any intentions, whatever". His preface to "Winter words" concluded : "I also repeat what I have often stated, that no harmonious philosophy is attempted is these pages———or in any bygone pages of mine, for that matter". The fact is that Hardy was too great an artist to leave muse for views. Like every other great artist, he denied to start with any pre-conceived pattern of philosophy that could be designated as belonging to a particular school of thought.

Hardy observed and studied the phenomena of life not through books but through living men and women, and recorded the impression in his works which such a study yielded to him with a perfect sense of beauty and pathos. The remark of Channing, "Every man is a volume, if you know how to read him" was wholly true in the case of Hardy. He passed down in the vale of life and saw steadily with an observant eye the vast panorama of different things, scenes and incidents——all leading to a bitter struggle for existence where success seldom greeted the brave and the deserving. But the impressions thus received are not always altogether fugitive and fleeting. They possess an inner thread of unity from the publications of his first book down to the last, each new production receiving clearer and clearer enunciation of his impressions till they become quite pronounced as 'views' or "patterns of thoughts."

To begin with his philosophy or views on life, the first point to be noted is that Hardy is a through realist and he presents quite a realistic approach to the problems of the world. He delves down deep into the sea of life and gets at the stern truth that——"Happiness is but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain." The heart of man is a battlefield where great forces ranged on opposite sides wage a titanic war, and ruffle the human calm and happiness. Men mean well and do ill : the good that they would do, they do not do, and the evil that they would not do, they do. So all have to suffer and toss endlessly on the waves of misery and pain. Thus Hardy's view of human life is sad and sombre. However, it is never immoral or depressing as some critics have called it, a philosophy of utter inertia and despair meant for moral cowards and intellectual invalids. On the other hand, it is meant for the men of courage and patience. In 'The Mayor of Casterbridge', Henchard is miserably tormented by the tragic blows of some sinister fate, yet even to the end his words are : "My punishment is not greater than I can bear." As a matter of fact, Hardy's pessimism was a reaction against the cheap complacement optimism

of his contemporaries. Hardy lived in an age which was pre-eminently distinguished for its ecomic prosperity and various social comforts brought into existence as the gifts of newly developed science. People were living almost in a paradise dripping with milk and honey and surrounded by radio and automobiles and other pleasures. Life seemed to them no more than a mid-summer-night's dream full of mirth and gaiety. Lying on the bed of life's roses they would often sing, 'Bliss to be alive and glorious to be young.' Poets and philosophers also indulged in such a false optimism and grew complacent and self-satisfied in seeing the world through many-coloured glasses of romance and fancy. But Hardy, being a realists, could not drive away from his sight the grim realities of things. He spoke vehemently against the complacency of his contemporaries and reminded them of the foul visitations of Fate. He spoke through the mouth of the heroine of 'Tess of D'Urbervilles'———

> *'Thy face shall be no more fair at the fall of thy Fate*
> *For thy life shall fall as a leaf and be shed as the rain."*

From his survey of the scheme of life as it is, Hardy came to the conclusion that this world is not the best possible as Pope would persuade us to believe. It is an imperfect world, a sorry scheme of things, where, in the words of Keats, 'men sit and hear each other groan.'

Looking to such a state of things on earth, some of us may set their hopes on heaven, and say 'what though we suffer here, for in heaven all our sorrows would be amply compensated.' But Hardy rules out all such possibility. For him there is happiness neither here nor there. He expressly declares through the mouth of Tess that 'God is not in Heaven and all is wrong with the world. If God is ever somewhere, He is most probably upon the Olympus Mountains, from where He hurls in secret every thunderbolt, earthquakes and disasters upon humanity.

Gods kill us for their sport and we are no better than toys in their hands as Shakespeare puts it,

"As flies to wanton boys are we to gods ;
They kill us for their sport."

Hardy saw too much of undeserved suffering in the world to believe in a merciful God. In a very characteristic poem of his, he paints the picture of a "godhead dying downwards, brain and eyes gone first." So strong was Hardy's rejection of God that he felt that what governs and controls the universe is only a Force, sometimes called Will, which is neither benevolent nor malevolent, and which is utterly indifferent to the feelings of man.

Hardy's philosophy is marked with a strong note of fatalism. "Character is Fate" and man possesses nothing such as 'Abrolute Free Will'. He has no freedom of choice. He is but a helpless bird imprisoned in the cage of Destiny. Although at times, he may flutter his wings with an intense longing to wander freely in the fresh blue sky, but alas, the bars are too strong to break. In the world of Hardy the malignant eyes of Fate stare severely on every character and render his or her personal "will" incapable of free role. Everything is pre-determined and none is the 'architect of his fate' or the 'captain of his soul'. To use the words of a famous Persian poet,

"The Moving Finger writes ; and having writ,
Moves on ; nor all the Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to conceal half a line
Nor all they Tears wash out a word of it".

Imp

Q. Comment on Hardy's attitude Nature as it is displayed in his famous Wessex novels. Also compare and constrast it with Wordsworth's view of Nature.

Answer. The novels of Hardy, particularly those which deal with the features of Wessex countryside, are interposed

with a plenty of beautiful descriptions of Nature. They are steeped in a pure pastoral atmosphere. They make us feel the beauty and significance of rural life and the greatness of the part which Nature plays in the joys and sorrows of those who partake of this life. Every object of Nature that is painted in these novels has it own characteristic, suggestion and meaning——'the individuality of the damp and fragrant woods; the meaning of the wind's voice, whether for storm or peace; the pre-domination of tempest; the spirit of the heath at every hour of the day and night; above all the mystic relation between the toiling peasants and the hills and valleys where they live and move and have their being". The fidelity and fondness with which Hardy describes the phenomena of Nature and shows his disgust of the artificial life of the modern mechanical age, leads us to think that his view of the Nature is similar to Wordsworth's view' that he is a belated disciple of the poet of Nature, and like him he is grieved to think 'what Man has made of man'. Like Wordsworth, he takes up for his study humble country-folk——"the farm hands, woodlanders, shepherds, dairymaids, furze-cutters, nondescript labourers, servants, cottagers". Again, like Wordsworth, he personifies Nature, and is "constantly in watch to find a human meaning in every part of the face of Nature". But the resemblance between the two extends only so far and no further. While Wordsworth takes a romantic view of Nature, Hardy takes a scientific view. Hardy does not believe in 'Nature's holy plan', its power of healing humans ill and maladies, nor does he believe that 'trailing clouds of glory do we come; For him Nature is full of strife and discord, and children are born with the wicked tendencies and dispositions derived from their ancestors. Hardy belonged to an age in which sentiment was at a discount and under the increasing influence of science people were learning to be rational and critical. Faith was replaced by doubt, sentiment and superstition by reason and commonsense. Under the existing conditions of the age, it was no longer possible for the poets as

well as prose-writers to regard Nature as an embodiment of divine spirit, or as a home of moral messages. Looked from scientific spectacles, Nature was no better than this noisy world of struggling humanity : it was, as Tennyson saw it, "red in tooth and claw with ravine".

Hardy, therefore, finds in Nature no peace, no holy plan, no compensating factor. On the contrary, he finds in it an intermittent and unceasing struggle for existence, a struggle that is ruthless, barbarous, a fight to the last where the ruling motto is 'might is right' ; where the weak get no chance but are totally perished, where the nourishing of the stronger is derived from the life-blood of the weaker. The big fish swallows the small, the lion preys on the deer, the giant tree in a forest wipes out the weaker species. Nature is devoid of sympathy ; it gives no hope : it fosters no bonds of kinship and love. The struggle is a blind struggle. It does not take care of the affairs of her children like a loving mother in whose house there is the reign of plenty and who has a 'holy plan' to nourish and to bring to perfection the youngers under her charge. It is blind to birth, blind to death. It has no time to look into the affairs of man, because there is a ceaseless and shattering struggle within itself. Nature, according to Hardy, is cruel in its unrelenting and unceasing struggle for existence. In one of his poems, Hardy shows that being fed up with the unrest arising out of the struggle for existence in humanity, he would go to wood, in the lap of Nature and derive some solace and peace from the observation of the holy plan and ways of Nature about which so much has been said by poet like Wordsworth and his followers. He hopes that at least Nature will be free from the vices of rivalry and jealousy, but he is shocked and totally disillusioned when he reaches there. He perceives that,

"Great growths and small
Show them to men akin ———
Combatants all,

Sycamore shoulders oak,
Bines the slim sapling yoke.
Ivy-spun halters choke
Elms stout and tall".

In the end, filled with horror at all these crimes of Nature the poet flees from the wood, and determines that life offers him no consolation except in the company of those human being who are as much the victims of suffering as he himself. In disgust the poet returns from Nature to mankind, as it were, choosing the lesser of the two evils :

"*Since, then, no grace I find*
Taught me of trees,
Turn I back to my kind
Worthy as these ;
There at last smiles abound
There discourse trills around,
There, now and then, are found
Life-loyalties."

Thus Hardy not only refutes Wordsworth's conception of Nature, but clearly shows that humanity is at least at times, far better than Nature, as "there, now and then, are found, Life loyalties." It may be that at times Nature may be calm and peaceful while men are engaged in some cruel deeds ; but at other times it may be raging, while mankind might be sleeping quietly and innocently. After witnessing the sale of his wife by Henchard, the customers come out of the furmity-woman's tent, and find Nature calm : "horses crossing their necks and rubbing each other lovingly" ; and Hardy here remarks : "In presence of this scene, after the other, there was a natural instinct to abjure man as the blot on an otherwise kindly universe ; till it was remembered that all terrestial conditions were intermittent, and that mankind might some night be innocently sleeping when these quiet objects were raging loud."

Hardy goes further and explains why there are imperfection in Nature ——— "cramps, black humours, wan decay, baleful blights, and distress." She means well, but she is blind "sightless are those of hers," and it is on account of her blindness that " in mothering she unwittingly sets wounds on what she loves." The Wordsworthian complaint was "What Man has made of Man" ; the Hardyan complaint, thus seems to be, "What Nature has made of Nature, on the one hand, and of Man, on the other." In one of his characteristic poems, Hardy supposes all creation to be the work of the mighty pair, Fate and Nature, whose origin and reason of existence cannot be explained, and all evils and imperfections to be the result of two things ——— the blindness of Nature and the unfeelingness of Fate :

> "*Mother of all things made,*
> *Matchless in artistry,*
> *Until with sight is she* ———
> *And though her ever well-obeved*
> *Vacant of feeling he.*"

Fate has eyes to see, but has no heart to feel. On the other hand, Nature has neither eyes to see, nor heart to feel. The Mother-Nature, so called or miscalled, has no regard for human passions and sentiments :

> "*The Dame has no regard, alas, my maiden,*
> *For love and loss like mine* ———
> *No sympathy with mind-sight memory-laden.*"

However, the various descriptions of natural scenes and sights which Hardy has given in between the paragraphs and pages of his Wessex novels, are supremely remarkable for their breadth and vividness. Regarding Hardy's description of Nature, Cazamian points out, "We come upon effects more powerful and of a rare quality, aimed at with a sure and certain skill. A great poet of Nature displays an exceptional gift for description which owes a great vast

range to the perception both of fine shades and of vast solemn harmonies." Particularly it is in description that Hardy's view of Nature finds its best expression. But at the same time description is interpreted with his philosophysical comments and reflections. The place which is most free from human beings or from signs of encroaching civilization appeals to him most because there Nature is still in her virgin state and it has not been polluted by the contaminating touch of modernity. Though he is found of woods and hills, yet that which casts a spell over him is the gloomy vastness of the moor, in which every living being vanishes, as if swallowed up in the depth of centuries. This is probably so because the young impressionable period of life was spent in the vicinity of the 'Egdon Heath', which he has immortalized in his novel 'The Return of the Native' under the name, "A face upon which time makes but little impression." The heath is personified ; it throbs with life ; it is omnipotent in its sombreness and vastness, the people inhabitating it being com letely under the sway of its influences which are different for the different kinds of people.

In his novels Hardy often employs Nature as a sort of background for human action. He utilizes it as something hoary and eternal beside the passing lives of mankind. Sometimes Nature is described as sharing in human moods and passions, but in reality all this is due to the human mind, which endows Nature with its own moods, feelings, and passions and sees them reflected in her face. In fact, it is not Nature that responds to the moods of the observer but that the impressions of Nature formulates the mood of the spectator. In the latter case man is not content with what the moment offers because it is not an outcome of his mood but the result of the impact from outer source, and hence human responses to Nature take on an adventurous enquiry, always trying to reveal the insoluble mystery of Nature, and though the attempt may not bear fruit, yet the modern man is not content to let Nature alone as something that defies solution and control as was the case in the

times past, when probing into the secrets of Nature was considered almost a sacrilege.

Such then is Hardy's view of nature and it is quite original. It is neither romantic like that of Wordsworth, nor intellectual like that of Meredith, nor idealistic like that of Browning, but it is objective and realistic. At the same time, Hardy's descriptions of Nature, as already shown above, are not exact word replica but are supplemented by his observations and comments, and these are what render his view of Nature unique, raising it almost to the level of philosophy, though Hardy professes to be no philosophers.

Impo

Q. "Hardy's pessimism is always elevating and seldom depressing." How far do you agree with this view ?

Answer. Hardy has come to be regarded as a pessimistic philosopher. But this view has certain very serious limitations which should be clearly borne in mind. In the first place, no philosopher can be called either optimistic or pessimism. Optimism or pessimism is a trait of temperament. It is entirely a subjective quality. An optimist always looks at the bright side of things and finds hope against hope, whereas a pessimist always looks through dark glasses and never sees any ray of hope; his vision is clouded; his views are partial. Hence these tendencies are absolutely unfit for philosophical reflection which requires a dispassionate, impartial and unclouded view of things, and seeks to discover an explanation of life in all its complications. Literally philosophy means 'love of knowledge' and therefore a philosopher has to give a comprehensive explanation, first of the relation of man with Nature, secondly, of the relation of man with highest power in the universe, and thirdly, of the ultimate relation between Nature and this highest power. As Hardy shows a natural inclination towards pessimism, he is unfit to be a philosopher, although people have taken great pains to prove him one because of the influence he received from his study of the natural philosophers of his age. However, here we have to consider

only the pessimism of Hardy and the real value of this quality in the novels that he wrote.

Hardy had been from the beginning of his life a weak and sensitive personality. He never enjoyed a sound and happy physique. He had to make his headway in a world which was highly complex and bitter. He had ambitions but could not realize them. Soon disgusted with the work of an architect, he came to literature with his ripe experience of life. He had seen life from the closest quarters. The problems of life that were becoming increasingly complex, were known to him as the first principles His experience of life around him coupled with his study of classical literature showed him that there is always in life more to be endured than to be enjoyed. Hence every novel of Hardy paints a world of unrelieved gloom and darkness where people suffer for no mistake of their own. Sometimes it is society that crushes and ruins them by the weight of its age-old customs and conventions; sometimes Nature turns out their enemy and assuming various forms and expressions devastates their crops and shatters their lives; sometimes it is Fate that through the instrumentality of chance upsets the balance and destroys the innocent and peace-loving creatures of Wessex; sometimes there is the onrush of modern civilization born of scientific inventions; which disturbs the harmony and tears into pieces the otherwise happy life of the inhabitants of this region. Often the clash is too much for the sufferers who have to face it boldly and die heroically. This spectacle of undeserved sorrow and suffering, and the inevitable death of persons who have sterling qualities of character and personality makes the reader for sometime very sad and sombre. The impression left on his mind is one of utter helplessness and hopelessness.

Sometimes Hardy tried to perform the role of a 'melionist'. He wrote "as a melionist (not a pessimist by the way), I think better of world." But this was a mere whim———a passing weakness. Hardy was always and deeply concerned with 'the plight of being alive.' He

mostly showed things getting worse. He had no hope, no belief that 'good shall be the ultimate goal of ill.' However, one thing is certain and it is this that his pessimism is not always so unreasonable as it appears. Hardy has said that "the highest fights of pen are mostly the excursions and revelations of souls unreconciled to life." It is in this assertion that we get the real clue to a correct interpretation of his pessimism. It is not a destruction of life, a negation of existence, an outcry against it. Hardy places tragic literature on a very lofty plane by saying, that he has addressed 'some of these novels of Wessex life, more especially to readers into whose souls the iron has entered." Often his novels possess qualities which are the very opposite of consolatory. But this is perhaps because the function of tragedy had not been understood by the time he wrote his novels. In those days Katharsis was found to be a very effective means. The awakening of pity and terror was an essential factor. Hence in the tragedies of Hardy the idea of tragic waste is always present. We feel that something very valuable has been lost. High hopes are set on his heroes who promise fully well, but all these hopes and expectations are shattered alongwith their death. But it is not their unmitigated suffering and unrelieved gloom which impresses as most. We know that the odds are heavy and beyond human power to subdue, and the fight which these heroes put up against them is definitely subline and ennobling. They fight against hostile circumstances with heroic fortitude. This heroic struggle leaves an exalted impression on the minds of the readers.

We thus note that pessimism of Hardy is ennobling, elevating and enriching. We are seldom depressed. Duffin has very aptly remarked; "Hardy's pessimism is always elevating and seldom depressing."

Q. What do you understand by 'Irony of Fate.' Illustrate your answer from the novels of Hardy.

Answer. Irony has been defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary as "the expression of one's meaning by language of opposite or different tendency, especially simulated adoption of anothers' point of view for ridicule; ill-timed or perverse arrival of event or circumstance in itself desirable, due to the feigned good will and actual malice of Fate, circumstance, *etc*; use of language that has inner meaning for a privileged audience and an outer meaning for the person addressed or concerned." In literature irony is exploited as a technical device, for it serves well as a figure of speech. Generally it is employed in the dramatic literature where it assumes two forms, one is the verbal irony and the other is the irony of situation or circumstance. The former kind of irony is available in dialogues where it expresses a meaning of opposite kind. The speaker speaks in such a language that the listener takes another meaning, while the real meaning is known only to the audience who are delighted by the criss-cross of meaning in the dialogue and the excitement of the scene. The second form of irony is that where the calculations of the ordinary mortals fail and the unexpected opposite happens, making a mess of the whole situation. This very literary device has been remarkably employed by the novelists as well. The working of chance is the same thing as the irony of either circumstance or event or fate.

Now the expression 'irony of fate' appears a little defective in so far as it tends to personify 'fate' and to introduce an emotional note into the way in which the underlying idea of this expression is to be understood. Human life does not always find adequate adjustment with the environment, and there is no necessary connection between the desert, desire and endeavour on the one hand, and reward, attainment and accompaniment on the other. They may coincide together, they may not, as the chance would have it. Thus irony may be good and conducive to

some highly desirable result as it is in the case of Dogbery's watch, which saves hers, the innocent victim of scandal in 'Much Ado About Nothing', or it may be cruel as it in the case of Romeo's ill.timed arrival at the tomb of Julliet. Unfortunately Hardy has emphasized only half the truth. He has dealt only with the cruel aspects of fate and presented what he calls 'the impishness of circumstances.' Though he is 'a complete, and cold master of his material', yet in this respect, he seems to be taken off his feet. His passion for the irony of fate soon begins to boil up and the result is that events in his novels become more cruel than they are in life itself. His world becomes dark and gloomy. Duffin remarks that "in life it is the unexpected that happens, in the world of Hardy's novels it is the undesirable-unexpected." Hardy is so much possessed by this irony of fate that "his whole novel is built, primarily, upon the doctrine of irony of Fate, as commonly understood."

Sometimes it may appear that Hardy invents events without any purpose except to intensify the tragic note of his novels; but these inventions are definitely not superficial. The coincidences are not only perfectly well-timed but also highly coherent and meaningful. In life we often dismiss them as 'mere chance events' with no significance, but Hardy, a true and accurate observer of the game of life, cannot miss them as superflous or irrelevant. All his masterpieces illustrate the truth of this remark. 'Tess' is a signal example of the part played in human destiny by a capricious and malignant fate. Again in 'Jude the Obscure' the hero wishes that 'somebody might have come along that way' and helped him. And it is this taste, this tone that pervades the whole of his work.

The above-mentioned conception of man's destiny on earth is clearly discernible in almost every novel of Hardy. In two novels———however, *Tess* and *Jude* the entire plot is made up of the bitterness of death. 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' and 'The Return of the Native' are equally pre-eminently bitter novels. It seems that the central

purpose in them was to lay bare the mocking cruelty of life. They are regarded by Duffin as "studies in the irony of fate."

Q. Comment on Hardy's observation that "Happiness is but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain."

Or

What is Hardy's attitude towards life ? Discuss with reference to his novels.

Answer. Hardy's attitude towards life is tragical. In spite of the fact that there is the variety of subjects, scenes and characters in his novels, his central theme in every one of them is the tragedy of life. From his keen observation of the actions and affairs of men, from the study of their minds and motives, from the way in which men become the the victims of circumstances, Hardy comes to the conclusion that this is an imperfect world, that there is more to be endured than enjoyed, that men and women are merely toys and play-things in the hands of Destiny. To use the words of Omar Khyyam :

"Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays :
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays."

"Moments of gaiety are but interludes and no part of the actual drama." "Happiness is but an occasional episode in the general drama of pain." The underlying idea of these statements is that this life of ours is a long, unending tale of misery and pain wherein moments of comparative security and comfort are but very few and far between. Life has little beauty, joy and goodness. For the most part it is a struggle, where success seldom greets the deserving, where the virtuous suffers and the vicious prospers. It is a battlefield where man, a little punny creature,

is pitted against the gigantic forces of Fate, God, Nature, Chance, Society, either singly or all put together, and where his moments of triumph are very insignificant and short-lived. It is a scene of much fretting, vexation, bustle and confusion. Death and Diease, Discord and strife, Ruin and Devastation stalk every where. Laws of Nature and rules of society are in conflict; the heart of the man is the arena, where great forces ranged on opposite sides wage a desperate war, the beast and the god in him are ever in conflict. Men mostly mean well but do ill. Something more powerful than they thwarts their plans, and they come to nothing. All have to suffer in the drama of this life.

> *"To each his sufferings : all are men,*
> *Condemned alike to groan ;*
> *The tender for another's pain,*
> *The unfeeling for his own."* (*Gray*)

The environment is too strong for men, who are but pigmy beings fighting with the giants of circumstances. Men come in this world unconsulted, and with tainted lives, inherited tendencies, are thrown into the midst of an environment which they did not create and for which they could not be responsible, and which crushes their noble aspirations with a cruel hand, and means a sure defeat even before the struggle is begun. Children suffers for the wrongs of their parents and even remote ancestors; our teeth are set on edge because our forefathers ate sour grapes. With this state of affairs there is no hope or joy in life. Every thing is predetermined and man has no freedom of will or choice. It is on account of such a view of life that Hardy's Novels turn upon tragic themes and unhappy endings. We find that his heroes and heroines come to grief through no apparent fault of their own, but through a sad perversity of circumstances, natural or social, in which they happen to live and move.

are many worse designers. His plots are clear, there is no confusion in them. All the same, his hold on design is slack and clumsy. There is no organic connection between form and content in many of his novels. In 'Two on a Tower', the germinal idea is highly imaginative. It is symbolic of that conflict between man and the Nature of things which is the root inspiration of Hardy's creative process. But, in order to make a full-length Novel about it, Hardy incorporates it in a tale which is highly intricate and improbable. The plot as it is invented and enlarged is feeble in itself and it has nothing to do with the imaginative stimulus which prompted him to write the book. The two pull against each other. The more we are moved by the spectacle of the love-scenes under the stars, the more are we annoyed when we are forced to divert eyes from it to follow the working of the plot. It is true that Hardy chooses themes which are fit for fiction, but he often executes his design loosely and carelessly. In 'The Woodlanders', after the death of Giles, it is clear that Grace should be reconciled with Fitzpiers, and the conclusion should have been brought about as quickly as it is decently possible. But Hardy takes forty pages over it. The readers grows impatient to reach a goal in sight, and his impatience brings with it most undesirable slackening of emotional tension. A similar disproportion mars 'The Trumpet Major.' The plot of this Novel is stretched by the repitition of the same incidents in slightly different forms several times ; first, Anne is shown as preferring Bob, then John, then Bob again. No development of character is revealed by these fluctuations in her feelings ; They are the consequences of outside events, arbitrarily introduced by Hardy to make the story long enough. The result is that the book, although delightful in separate episodes, is a little monotonous as a whole.

The novel is peculiarly liable to expose an author's weakness in the art of design. For it sets him some peculiarly difficult problems. The novel proposes to give a convincing picture of real life, but, like other works of art, is only successful if it composes its material in an

orderly pattern. Life is anything but orderly. How then is he two satisfy both his obligations ? How is he to devise a picture which satisfies us equally as a pattern and as an illusion of life ? How is he to reconcile form with fact ? It can be even by authors working within as strict a convention of plot as Hardy did. Jane Austen, to name no others, did it. Her stories are exquisitely shapely, and yet create a convincing illusion of reality. But not so Hardy's. His vision of life is effective enough. Even though it is not a realistic one, it has the profusion and energy of reality. But in order to force it into a pattern, he tends to impose a plot on which it is not convincing at all. The most disastrous example of Hardy's failure in this kind is in 'Tess of the D' Urbervilles'. It is essential to the development of his plot that Alec should get Tess into his clutches again after she has been deserted by Angel. But how is this going to be managed ? For Tess had never liked Alec and now hated him as the creator of all her sufferings. Indeed, he has been presented to us as a cigar-smoking, rich young vulgarian, living only for his animal pleasures. Hardy, however, suddenly reintroduces him into the book in the unexpected character of a preacher. Alec, he tells us, has been converted. But the event is too odd for the reader to be expected to accept it without explanation. Alec should have been described to us as possessing some emotional streak in his character which might make such an event probable. Hardy never attempts to do this : indeed, when, once more for the purposes of the plot, Alec has to behave like a villain again, Hardy simply says airily that his conversion lost its power and that he reverted to what he was before. All through his books, the reader is liable to knock up against these crude pieces of machinery, tearing the delicate fabric of imaginative illusion into pieces.

Hardy's plots are often composed of incidents and events which are not consistent with reality or real life. In his plots Hardy cares more for creating tragic impressions than for depicting a real picture of life. His creative power is so much stronger than his critical sense that he

always disregards probability if it stands in the way of emotional impression he wishes to make. As a matter of fact, he was not a good judge of probability. He introduced unexpected chance-happenings to complete the tragic fall of his characters, without minding whether they were capable of being accepted by the reader as possible or probable, or otherwise. Hardy is liable to over-emphasize the part played by chance in producing catastrophe. That it should play such a part is, of course, an essential element in his view of life. Chance is the incarnation of the blind forces controlling human destiny. The smallest incident may help to determine a great event. But no author should make chance condition the action of the story, and tax the reader's credulity. For, even if man is not a free agent, the powers that direct his fortunes——his general circumstances, his inherited dispositions——are too constant to be diverted at every turn from achieving their ends by some trivial chance happening. Blind chance, therefore, should be introduced in fiction as a determining element only at some crucial moment when time is everything. But Hardy crowds several improbable incidents or chance-happening in a short space of time, merely to give the effect of hostile Fate, driving his characters to destruction, depite all their efforts to save themselves. As David Cecil remarks: "Hardy seems to be twisting his plot to suit his purpose. The characters seem puppets all right, but puppets not in the hands of Fate but of the author."

There is another reason for this failure. Hardy insists on this crowding of evil chances to illustrate his doctrine that man is the sport of an indifferent Destiny. The most fatal error into which he was led by his lack of critical sense was preaching. At moments, obsessed by his views about the universe, he turns from an imaginative creator into a propagandist. We have to remember that a true artist's first obligation should be to his vision rather than to the propaganda of his intellectual beliefs. It is true that he can have his moral point of view to judge things for himself, but he should never present his moral so

forcibly that it may divert his attention from the imaginative world he has created. His moral views should be best left to reveal themselves involuntarily. The artists' only conscious duty should be to the truth of his creative vision. Every other consideration must be sacrificed to it. Hardy realized this and held that the function of novel is to record impressions, not convictions. But his practice was not always true to his principles. Like other Victorians, he was a stern moralist, absorbedly interested in working out his philosophy of life. Now and again, undisciplined as he was by a strong critical sense, his moral intention dominates his artistic inspiration. In 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' at many places, he appears on the scene, and pausing the action of the story, begins to deliver his moral lectures on the bitterness of fate, the cruelty of social conventions and the weaknesses of human character.

Another great weakness of Hardy is that sometimes he works outside his range, and attempts to describe the type of life of which he has little experience. It is true that most plots involve dealing with some aspects of experience that have not stirred the author's imagination, but a competent craftsman with a good critical sense will generally avoid the worst consequences of leaving his range. If his story requires him to write about some aspect of life which does not inspire him, he takes trouble to study it sufficiently so that his picture may not be, at any rate, inaccurate. But Hardy seldom does so. Without having any proper workable knowledge of high fashionable life in cities, courts and camps, he tries to paint characters that represent this sort of life, the result being that such characters are never realistic or life-like. Hardy's excursions among complex intellectual types of human beings are almost as disastrous. Here, he was led astray by another motive. The nineteenth century was an age of growing self-consciousness. People were investigating psychology and analyzing the human motive as never before. Hardy was aware of this tendency. He even said that it was not to be resisted : novel must be more analytical. But in practice he failed, for he was not a

psychologist. He tried to paint some typical figures of the modern age————Knight, a modern thinker ; Fitzapier, a modern sceptic ; Sue, an advanced woman, but with all these characters he met with failure, or if not failure, then much less success than the one which he achieved in the protrayal of rural characters. As David Cecil remarks, "Fitzpiers and Knight are no better than collection of views, imperfectly clothed in flesh and blood. Hardy's descriptions of their thoughts are just essays on the subjects they are thinking about ; their conversations are like debates in college societies".

Hardy invented the type of characters mentioned above with a view to showing his indignation of the scientific and competitive trends of modern artificial society and civilization. By criticising these characters he criticized the condition of modern life. But we should note that Hardy lapses into philosophic inconsistency, for while on the one hand he holds circumstances as responsible for the downfall of his characters, on the other hand, he criticized characters themselves. These double charges are inconsistent one with another. If all human beings are equally the puppets of circumstance, then circumstance is responsible for their views and institutions. The characters who play the part of the villain have also to be pitied if they suffer, for they as much the creatures of cruel destiny as Tess and Jude ; and as such are no more to be judged as responsible for their errors.

In the end, let us note that Hardy's defects as a novelist relate not only to the contents of his novels but also to their form. The violation of ordinary rules of syntax and grammar, use of technical and archaic words, and a certain crabbedness of expression which seems to be partly deliberate, are among the defects of Hardy's style and diction. Yet when we have said everything, we cannot ignore the greatness of Hardy's creative powers which were far in advance of his weaknesses. He failed as a craftsman but attained great heights of success as an artist.

Q. Write a short note on Hardy's style and diction.

Or

"Hardy is a true master of prose". (Meredith) Discuss.

Answer. Style is the physiognomy of soul. Style is the personal use of language ; it is as illuminating to study the style of a prose-writer as to study the passion of a poet. It is in the style of a writer that we see the relation between inspiration and exoression in a most tangible form. Personality appears in a writer's language as it does in the strokes of the painter's brush or the marks of the sculptor's chisel. In other words, the author's style is the result and final expression of his prevailing outlook on the totality of existence. This is eminently so in Hardy's work. His style is the microcosm of his own tastes and talents, exhibiting all his faults and virtues in their most characteristic form. It is, as Duffin remarks, "essentially of the philosophic type, an emanation of his mind". It carries with it an impression of stern, sad eyes, gazing steadily and unflinchingly out over the wilderness of the world's wrong. It is calm and cold, subdued and sombre As a critic remark, "his style is grey ——— grey as November skies or Odysseus' sullen seas". For ordinary narrative purposes Hardy uses a style that is bleak, bare and bald, although as Arnold said of Wordsworth, "it is bald as the mountain tops are bald, with a balance that is full of grandeur". Hardy's style rarely lacks dignity or strength, though it is neither conspicuously beautiful, nor luxuriant nor alluringly harmonious. On the whole, "it is pure prose : its movement has nothing in it of passion, nothing of the passion that beats in the Psalms or in Ruskin's prose".

Hardy's style has no peculiarity in particular and there is some truth in the opinion of a critic who says that Hardy has no style. Hardy employs words with a view to expressing his thoughts as clearly and powerfully as possible, rather than with the purpose of mere decoration

or ornamentation. His writings show no evidence of the tricks and artifices which we find in the instances of writers who make a conscious attempt at cultivating a style as an end in itself rather than as means for the expression of their thoughts. To Hardy style is a means to an end. The end is the faithful communication to the reader of his experiences and impressions of life. It is true that he is neither a born master of style like Thakeray nor a mad one like Stevenson, but he knows how to write in a manner that corresponds with and expresses his profoundest intentions as perfectly as human language is capable of. In his novels he shows that he can rise and fall to any height and depth according to the nature of his theme. He is capable of being equal to any situation presented by the necessities of the plot. He is capable of sounding the various strings in the mighty instrument of the human heart with consummate artistic sureness. He can be passionate, pastoral, humorous, tender, tragic, emotional and ironic, as the scene and situation demand. That is why we find that all his Novels are not written in the same key, or in the same tone. The style of his Novels varies sufficiently one from the other and sometimes in a single Novel itself there is a marked variation. In books like 'Far from the Madding Crowd' and 'The Woodlanders' the pastoral style predominates ; the tragic in 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' and 'Jude the Obscure :' while 'Tess of the D' Urbervilles' and 'The Return of the Native' represent a queer mixture of the pastoral and the tragic. When Hardy is absorbed in the description of the details of Wessex life and the exhibition of the simple humours of his rustic characters, his style is "racy, of the soil, humorous, perfect without self-consciousness, and dialect flows into and out of it without disturbance." But on the other hand when he is required to paint some grand natural landscape, or to measure the mysterious depths of human psychology, or to deal with the description and analysis of any sublime idea, mood, scene or character, his style becomes passionate and picturesque, and rises to the heights of poetic grandeur and sublimity. The rhythm

of his language on such occasions 'conveys the same emotion as the notes of a great cathedral organ at the evening twilight hour.' Duffin rightly remarks: "It may be said of Hardy, as Dryden said of Shakespeare in a slightly different connection, that he is always great when some great occasion is presented to him." The extraordinary grandeur and sublimity of his expression are often to be found in the opening and concluding chapters of his Novels. The beginning and the ending of 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' abound in passages which are superb models of tragic prose.

Hardy's prose style keeps sternly in touch with the tradition of our ancient speech. He uses words with a full consciousness of their weight and meaning. His sentences are compactly knit, and have no loose edge. Moreover, his periods have a pleasant sinous movement, which proves that he is sensitive to harmony as well as to structure. His mastery of dialect is complete, and, like all masters of dialect, he records the talk of people with a finer freedom than he brings to the management of the cultured speech. For Hardy, the English language is an instrument of precision. He will exclude no word from his vocabulary which clarifies his meanings. He uses words of Saxon and Latin origin with impartiality. It is perhaps a defect of his style that he employs such inexpressive nouns as 'premesis' or 'erection' when the dignified and simple 'house' would far better serve his purpose. But it was his fortune, good or evil, to live in the days of a tyrannical science, and to admit into his language words of curious shape and sound.

One of the great qualities of Hardy, the literary artist, is that he shows an unfailing skill in the use of similes and metaphors. He reflects long over his subject and then dissipating his complete idea in a graduated chain of reasoning embodies it in a comparison or an image so expressive, exact and transparent that behind the figure or image we perceive all the details of the idea. Sometimes there are classical and mythological allusions but they are

employed to stir the reader's imagination and vivify the appeal rather than to make a vain display of scholarship. It is the regular habit of Hardy that before writing about any idea, mood, scene or situation, he conceives it in the form of a mental picture and then attempts to render it on the paper through the medium of his characteristic words and figures of speech. "He writes with an eye on the object." When he describes an event he sees it happening before his mind's eye. "If a vehicle passes a window, Hardy is the room and knows what effect its passing has on the light." Hardy,s similes and images show felicity, original illuminating power and complete precision.

As Hardy's conceptions are creative so also his language and style. David Cecil observes : "Hardy's conceptions are intensely imaginative. His words do go beyond his logical meaning to suggest all the subtleties and overtones of the mood in which he regarded it. To the poet's eye he added the poet's finer sensibility to the use of language. Eustacia's "Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries" ; the half-naked hill of Norcomb with its "vague still horizon" ; Henchard's garden "silent, dewy and full of perfume" ; the first description of Jude's son, "a ground swell from ancient years of night seemed to lift the child in this, his morning-life, when his face took a back view over some great Atlantic of time,"————in these phrases Hardy, in the fervour of inspiration, has struck a chord which sets the reader's imagination astir like a line of Shakespeare or Donne."

Hardy has made a skilful use of words for the names of his characters. He has given to his characters such names as literally express their qualities. In this respect he assumes the role of a dramatist. Like the characters of Sheridon, Fielding, Dickens or Henry James, Hardy's characters are also symbolized by the names they bear. 'Phillotson' is a metathesis of 'Phillistine'. Oak is name obviously expressive of endurance and dogged faith. In 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' 'Michael' means militant and

Henchard subtler, suggesting that Michael Henchard is a man of strong but subtle character.

Besides similes, metaphors, suggestive words, phrases, quotations and classical and mythological references, Hardy has also exploited in his novels the conventional device of letters. Richardson is the first great master of epistolary form of fiction, and though Hardy does not make such a conspicuous use of letters as is made by Richardson in his 'Pamela', yet the few letters that are introduced in his novels are wonderfully apt and dramatic. They are recognised as a special kind of 'dramatic self-expression or projection'. A very suggestive and dramatic use of epistolary device is made in 'Tess' and 'Jude the Obscure.' In 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' we have many letters Written by Lucetta to her lover, Henchard. These letters are at once personal and passionate. They are called "the passionate bundle." They reveal the personality of Lucetta as well as contribute to the aesthetic pleasure of the plot of the novel.

However, Hardy is not absolutely free from faults in respect of his language and style. Not that he lapses into grammatical errors and gives misrelated participles and split infinitives, but he also dashes off sentences which are altogether uncouth, shapeless and unfinished. David Cecil remarks ; "Of course, this uncouthness is partly deliberate. His Gothic taste shows itself in his choice of words as much as in his choice of subjects. He has a perverse pleasure in crabbedness for its own sake - ——loves to employs words that most people would avoid ; 'domicile' for house, or 'congelation' for freezing, or. 'habiliments' for clothes. He even makes an adjective of the last and talks somewhere of a man's 'habilimental' taste, meaning his taste his dress. He often cannot manage the ordinary syntax and grammar of the English language. He finds it hard to make a plain statement plainly, and he does not improve matters by decking out his misgotten sentences with faded cliches and genteel circumlocutions."

Having said all that we can say about the virtues and faults of Hardy's style, it always remains necessary to note that he never cared for style as an end in itself. He wrote like a fine gentleman at ease, with perfect intimacy and communion with the reader, though with considerable negligence. He himself maintained that "the secret of a living style lies in not having too much style——in being a little careless, or seeming to be, here and there." Duffin remarks that "Hardy was not a born master of style like Thackeray, nor a made one like Stevenson. Like some good orators, he requires a stimulant before eloquence is forthcoming. But when his theme makes demand, as it does more than half the time he is writing, he is inspired by it to heights and splendours not easily attainable." His style on great occasions becomes poetic without being mechnically rhythmic, emotional without sentimentality and humorous without degenerating into sheer farce. It shows a sense of restraint which adds dignity and sublimity to his writing, and is a mirror of his most inward thoughts and feelings about life at large. It is true that his language is occasionally defective, full of grammatical errors and lapses, but the general effect or appeal of his paragraphs is astonishingly vivid and thrilling. The truth is, as David Cecil points out, that two elements go to make a good style. The first is the element of understanding, that grasp of the nature of the English language which enables an author to write it clearly, accurately and economically. The second is the element of sensibility, that feeling for the flavour of a word and the flow of a rhythm which enables him to write it eloquently and expressively. Hardy——as one might expect——has the second in the highest degree, but is noticeably lacking in the first ; with the result that an intolerable deficiency in craftsmanship appears in his style side by side with wonderful touches of eloquence and dignity. In short, as David Cecil obrerves, "Hardy writes clumsily, but he writes creatively."

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گٹ بھرو گائیڈز کی چند خصوصیات

- گائیڈز کو تجربہ کار اور کہنہ مشق استاد صاحبان نے نہایت محنت سے تیار کیا ہے۔
- گائیڈز میں صرف وہی سوالات شامل ہیں جن کا امتحانی پرچہ جات میں سیٹ (SET) ہونا لازمی ہے۔
- گائیڈز میں شامل سوالات کو نہایت ہی مؤثر اور دلکش انداز میں حل کیا گیا ہے تاکہ ممتحن حضرات زیادہ سے زیادہ نمبر دے سکیں۔
- گائیڈز غیر ضروری مواد سے بالکل پاک ہیں لیکن اختصار کے ساتھ اس بات کا بھی خیال رکھا گیا ہے کہ کوئی ایسی بات شامل ہونے سے نہ رہ ... نقطۂ نظر سے مفید اور ضروری ہو۔
- ... سادہ، سلیس اور عام فہم ہے اور طلباء کم وقت میں ... سے ذہن نشین کر سکتے ہیں۔

آپکی نمایاں اور یقینی کامیابی کی ضمانت ہے

...سل ——— اُردو بازار ——— لاہور